

ENCOUNTER

CURRENT AFFAIRS — LITERATURE — THE ARTS

£1.50 APRIL 1985

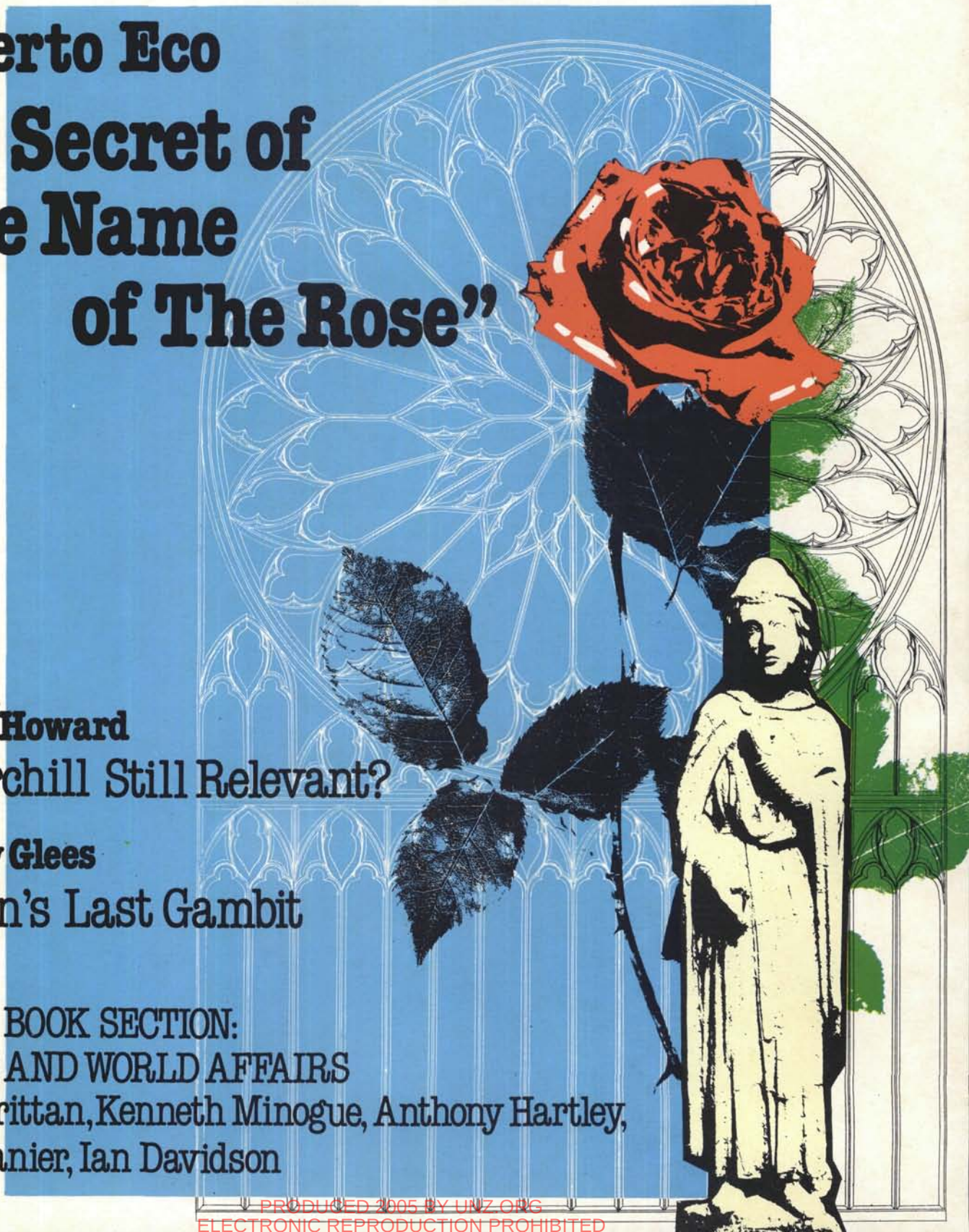
Umberto Eco **The Secret of** **"The Name** **of The Rose"**

Michael Howard
Is Churchill Still Relevant?

Anthony Glees
Winston's Last Gambit

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION:
POLITICS AND WORLD AFFAIRS

Samuel Brittan, Kenneth Minogue, Anthony Hartley,
David Spanier, Ian Davidson



The Spectator

Alan Watkins
Frank Johnson
Murray Sayle
Auberon Waugh
Charles Moore
Peregrine Worsthorne
Richard West
Ferdinand Mount
Peter Quennell

A. N. Wilson
Elizabeth Jennings
Timothy Garton Ash
Eric Christiansen
Enoch Powell
Peter Ackroyd
Alexander Chancellor
Peter Levi
P. J. Kavanagh

Politics, Foreign Reports, The Press, Theatre, Books, High Life, Low Life, Poetry,
Films, Fine Art, Music, Television, Opera, Wine & Food, Literary Competitions

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE EVERY WEEK. 75p. DON'T MISS IT

ENCOUNTER BINDER

The ENCOUNTER Easibinder enables readers, for half the cost of full binding, to preserve their copies in an attractive and durable format. Each copy of the magazine, as received, can be quickly inserted in the case and secured there. Copies can just as easily be removed.

The binder holds up to five copies. It is strongly made with stiff covers, bound in blue cloth, with the title of the magazine blocked in gold on the spine. Full assembly instructions are included with each binder.

The ENCOUNTER Easibinder costs £4.50 or \$9.60, including the costs of packing and posting by surface mail to any address in the world. There is no trade discount.

Order by coupon or by similar letter if you prefer not to cut your copy.



To **ENCOUNTER (Binder)**,
89 ST MARTIN'S LANE,
LONDON WC2N 4JS.

Please send _____

ENCOUNTER Easibinder(s).

I enclose cheque/P.O. for _____

(£4.50 or \$9.60 per binder)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ENCOUNTER

APRIL 1985 VOL. LXIV No. 4 ISSN 0013-7073

EDITORS

Melvin J. Lasky
and Richard Mayne

EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER
Anthony Robinson

MANAGING EDITOR
Margot Walmsley

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Bryan Healing

ADVERTISEMENT DIRECTOR
John Hall

ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER
Janice Ward

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Jacqui Lewis

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Pat Savage

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT
Pat Shutler

ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT
Shirley Lewis

RECEPTION & ENQUIRIES
Sharon Croasdale

ADVISORY BOARD

Maurice Cranston
D. J. Enright
Anthony Hartley
Leo Labedz
Edward Shils
John Weightman

PUBLISHING ADVISERS

Lord Ardwick
Blouke Carus
Leon Levy
Lord Cudlipp
Cecil Harmsworth King
Julio Nunez
Jack Watmough
Gary Bogard (chairman)

COVER
David Costa

CONTENTS

A Night with Kant (<i>story</i>)	<i>Iain Crichton Smith</i>	3
Reflections on "The Name of The Rose"	<i>Umberto Eco</i>	7
Is Winston Churchill Still Relevant?	<i>Michael Howard</i>	20
Churchill's Last Gambit	<i>Anthony Glees</i>	27
Column	<i>M</i>	38

POEMS

*Paul Groves 6, Dannie Abse 19, John Gohorry 36, Peter Porter 37,
Jonathan Wonham 40, James Lasdun 50*

NOTES & TOPICS

Bitter Defeat, Total Occupation	<i>A. G. Kageneck</i>	41
Left to Right?	<i>Max Beloff</i>	43
China's Insoluble Dilemma	<i>Brian Crozier</i>	46
Sherlock Holmes & Socialist Realism	<i>François Bondy</i>	48
Sartre, the Illustrious Innocent	<i>François Fejtö</i>	49

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION: POLITICS & WORLD AFFAIRS

... and the Same Old Problems	<i>Samuel Brittan</i>	51
Eisenhower & After	<i>Anthony Hartley</i>	61
The Hucksters of Happiness	<i>Kenneth Minogue</i>	66
Political Ecology of Britain	<i>Ian Davidson</i>	68
Blind Spots & Believers	<i>David Spanier</i>	73

DISCUSSION

The Far-Away Falklands	<i>Edward Pearce</i>	74
	<i>Julian Amery</i>	77

BOXES

Things Past (<i>Michael Field</i>)	42
--------------------------------------	----

LETTERS	AUTHORS	LIFE & LETTERS
79	26	81

Your mind is starving for stimulus. Order an eight month supply of *The American Spectator* today!

PRODUCED 2009 BY ORNL/ETC
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Iain Crichton Smith

A Night with Kant

EACH EVENING Kant went for a walk. And as he walked he brooded about the Categorical Imperative. It seemed to him that the Categorical Imperative was as fixed as the sun.

One night he saw a beggar beating up his woman, hitting her across the face over and over again. The beggar wore a long coat and his face was unshaven.

"Shall I tell him about the Categorical Imperative?" he asked himself, but decided against it, though the woman was screaming with a loud piercing voice.

"You old fart, I'll kill you", the beggar shouted. One eye shone madly in his head.

Kant walked on in his neat suit. A watch ticked in his breast pocket. It seemed to him as he looked at the stars that the beggar and the woman were both necessary parts of the universe, as a mainspring was part of a watch.

Another time he saw a thief stealing along with a bagful of stuff he had taken from a shop in which a window was starred and broken.

"No, I'll not tell on him", he thought. "I will let him go on his way. Why should I interfere? I am not God." The thief glared at him with piercing eyes as if saying, "If you tell anyone what I have done I will kill you."

Kant wondered what the mind of the thief was like, why he had stolen. He was troubled by the quick bright eyes, the eyes of a man who knew he was doing wrong and enjoying the sensation of it.

How beautiful the stars were, that glittering city which seemed like a remote reflection of a real city. He imagined the stars as the souls of the dead, glittering. How really happy he was to be doing what he was doing. There was no one happier; he needed no other human being, he needed only his mind, the universe, that was all.

Yet sometimes he was disturbed by strange thoughts. What if the world that he was seeing was an unreal spectral world? What if there was nothing out there that he could trust? What if there had been no thief at all, no beggar, no screaming woman? But he put these thoughts away from him as quickly as they had come. Why should he need a witness? Why couldn't he depend only on himself?

Another night a policeman stopped him and said, "Who are you? Why are you walking about the streets every night?"

"I am a philosopher", said Kant. "I am thinking."

The policeman looked at him suspiciously.

"I thought, sir", he said, "that you were following that young girl."

"What young girl?" said Kant.

"Never mind", said the policeman.

Such a self-contained little man this was, such a funny precise man. Perhaps indeed he had been following that girl. You could never tell with these oldish people.

Kant wondered whether he should mention the Categorical Imperative to the policeman. He couldn't understand how the latter's mind worked. In fact it seemed to him that he didn't understand how anyone's mind worked, except perhaps his own. The policeman too he considered had a secret violent eye. He was beginning to wonder whether the world was more treacherous, phantasmal, than he had originally considered it to be.

ONCE HE HEARD TWO WOMEN talking. One was saying to the other, gesturing furiously, "One should stand up for what one believes in. Speak straight out, that is what I think." Later he heard the same woman saying, "It doesn't help to be blunt nowadays. It's better to kowtow and take your hat off to your superiors."

Kant couldn't understand how people could be so irrational, so contradictory. He wondered if perhaps the world was divided into two groups, the philosophers and the others. Nor could he understand how people were so noticing of the world around them, more noticing than he was.

For instance he heard some men talking about a factory which had just been built. He had passed it every night and yet he hadn't even seen it. Yet these men had studied it in minute detail.

"They shouldn't have a building like that one there", one man was saying. "It's ugly, that's what it is. It doesn't fit in."

And the other man who was bald and fat, said, "They shouldn't have hired a local firm. Do you know that they take much longer to finish the work? They take advantage, that's what they do."

Kant gazed vaguely at the factory with its many windows. How had he not noticed it before? And yet factories were useful, they produced commodities. It occurred to him that he knew nothing about the workings of bakeries, butchers' shops, nor did he know what butchers or bakers thought of, or how they conducted their lives. Yet he knew about the Categorical Imperative which they knew nothing of, and conducted their lives in ignorance of it.

What is wrong with me, he asked himself, how do I not have eyes like other people?

And it troubled him that he was so stupid as not to have noticed a factory like that rising from a site where before there had only been emptiness. Again he was stirred by vague guilty feelings. Could it be that these people knew more about the world than he did? Could it be that mice, dogs, cats and rats were more knowledgeable than he was? Could it be that people were secretly laughing at him because he appeared such a fool with his head in the clouds? Or perhaps at the same time as they thought this they also thought that he was a clever man, cleverer than they were themselves. And yet he didn't feel himself to be clever at all. On the contrary he felt himself to be stupid, stupider than the men and women who noticed factories, and were aware of the inner workings of machines.

ONCE HE TALKED TO a man whose job was building houses. "You put the foundations in first", the man said to him. "But sometimes you get a fellow coming from headquarters and he will tell you that the foundations aren't deep enough, so you have to dig deeper. Dampness is one of the things you have to watch for when you are building a house. Condensation you have to look out for on windows. And you should make sure that the house blends in with its surroundings. All these things you have to remember. What do you do yourself?"

"Nothing", said Kant, "I am retired." He was ashamed to tell the man that he was a philosopher, that he sat in a study with books and pen and paper, and that he spent most of his time thinking.

"I hope to be retired myself some day", said the man, "but at the moment I can't afford to do that."

"Why not?" said Kant.

"Well, it's like this", said the man, "It's to do with my wife. She says I would be in her way in the house. Women are funny, you understand."

"Yes", said Kant.

"You see", the man continued comfortably, "you have to treat them carefully, as if you were walking on marshy ground. One minute my wife is saying to me, 'You're never at home to help about the house, you never put in shelves, you're too tired', and the next moment she's saying, 'I don't want you to retire, you'd be in my way. Under my feet.' And that's the fashion of it", said the man philosophically.

"Take this place we're sitting in", said the man. "Now you watch that girl there, the one in the yellow apron. Her name is Gretchen and I know for a fact she comes from a poor family. And yet she will turn up her nose if you don't buy more than one cake. You have to watch the lie of the land, same as when you're building a house. Now yourself now, you'll have experience of these things. I don't need to be telling you them. I would say now you had been a schoolmaster."

"No", said Kant. "I don't think of myself as a schoolmaster."

"Never mind", said the man confidently. "I can tell you were a scholar. I was never a scholar. All I ever read were instruction books."

"Are they difficult to understand?" said Kant curiously.

"Not if you keep your wits about you", said the man, who in actual fact wore glasses and in his stooping fashion himself looked like a scholar, and not a builder at all. "I've seen instructions written in languages that I don't know but that doesn't bother me. I have a picture in my head of what the thing is to be like. Instinctive, you understand. Sometimes I don't need an instruction book at all. I'll tell you something", he continued expansively. "Once I was putting in plumbing and this contraption came along and I'd never seen one like it before. But I installed it just the same."

"Is that right?" said Kant.

"Yes, it's right enough. I have this instinct, you understand. Ever since I was a child. Some people don't have it but I do. Now you take that factory out there. I wouldn't have built it like that, and I would have finished it quicker. I wouldn't have put in so many windows but you can't tell these people anything."

After the man had left, Kant sat looking around him. Sitting in the café were two young people, the girl gazing into the boy's eyes adoringly. She clasped his hands in hers and began to talk animatedly about some party which they had attended the previous night.

"I saw her wearing the same dress before", the girl was saying, while at the same time she stroked the boy's hands gently. "The pink one."

"Is that right?" said the boy, gazing abstractedly into the girl's eyes.

"Of course, silly", said the girl. "Didn't you notice? And another thing, she doesn't have to tell me that she's related to the Schumanns. I know for a fact she isn't."

KANT STOOD UP and went outside. He looked upward. The stars were numerous like seeds, and remote and beautiful and sparkling. Space and time. They were the conditions of man's existence.

He glanced at his watch. It was seven o'clock at night.

As he was walking along he was stopped by a young woman in a short skirt who said to him, "I can show

you a good time.” Her cheeks were artificially red and her legs were muscular and strong.

“The time is seven o’clock”, said Kant mildly. “It is neither better nor worse.” The young woman looked at him in amazement and then tottered away arrogantly on her high heels. Kant was stirred by a regretful desire, so vague it was no more than a wandering breeze. And at that moment the Categorical Imperative was very distant indeed.

It was like a ghostly axle in the sky.

Around him were feverish images of colour which seemed to speak of freedom. And he felt very peculiar.

“What am I doing in this place?” he asked himself. “How did I arrive in this street which I walk so punctually every night? I can’t understand it.” And it seemed to him that he could have done something different, been something very different. But the shell that he had constructed round himself protected him, and only late at night did he hear howls as if from the centre of space itself.

Purity, purity, he said to himself. Purity is what I need. Simplicity. But how can one be a saint and live in the world? And he clutched firmly at his watch, that round golden globe on which he depended, in its exactitude. Always ticking like his heart. Except that unlike his heart it was renewable.

ANOTHER NIGHT he saw a woman walking along the street alone, and her nose was as long as that of a witch such as he had once seen in a story-book when he was a child. Yet what a fool he was. Of course there were no witches, and of course that specific woman was not a witch. On the other hand, as he passed her he felt that at any moment she would burst out cackling and shout disgraceful things after him. Of course she couldn’t put a spell on him. Naturally not. Yet he saw her in space dancing with an imaginary illuminated broom which was like the Categorical Imperative.

There is something else, he thought, there is. Behind the stars there is something else, behind the houses there is something else. Deep in the earth, in the remote depths of the universe, there is something else. And it is laughing at me. It is mocking me. It is saying, Who do you think you are? It is saying, Look at that silly man with his watch, he thinks he understands it all. But I know, I know, the thing was saying, I know differently. Deep in the roots and in space itself I AM.

And Kant saw a green snake undulating in the sky, a phantasmal shimmering snake.

And he was suddenly shaken with fear. When he held his hand out one of his fingers was trembling. He gazed at it for a long time but it didn’t stop shaking. It was like a magnetic needle that had gone crazy.

Once he saw two small children running away after snatching a handbag from an old woman. They disappeared into the darkness as if into a den. The old

woman began to weep, and Kant went up to her, put his hand gently on her arm and said, “Here’s some money.”

But the old woman replied, “No, indeed, I’ll not take it. I have never owed anyone anything in my whole life.”

“What, who?” Kant muttered. “I don’t understand.”

“I’ve never owed a penny”, said the old woman, sniffing yet indomitable. “I saw them. They were two girls.”

“A girl and a boy”, said Kant.

“No, they were two girls”, said the old woman resolutely. “They were about sixteen years old.”

“Not more than eleven”, said Kant. “I’m sure they were not more than eleven.”

“Not at all, sixteen they were”, said the old woman definitely.

Suddenly Kant lost his temper and shouted, “They were not more than eleven years old and they were both wearing red jackets.”

“Green”, said the old woman. “As sure as I’m standing here it was green they were wearing. I still have my faculties, you know.” And she glared furiously at Kant.

“Green”, she said, “and you must come and tell the police that.”

“No”, said Kant, “I can’t do that.”

What a fool the woman was. Of course the children had been wearing red, even allowing for the darkness. They had certainly not been wearing green. On the other hand she was one of the ones he had heard discussing the factory. In fact, she was the woman whom he remembered as saying that such a stink would not be allowed. He turned away from her in case she would force him to go with her to the police station; he had enough to do with his time. It seemed to him that the ground was trembling under his feet, that the universe was quivering like a morass, that perhaps it didn’t exist at all. Why, that old woman might say that it was he who had stolen her money. He looked down at his suit, which was yellow in the light of the lamps. He seemed like a jester, a clown. He took out his watch and consulted it: it gazed back at him, reassuringly golden and round. A tranquil moon.

“A good time”, he heard the voice saying seductively. And the words, “A good time”, echoed in his head. And at that moment he saw her again. It seemed as if she was always there. She was smiling at him, hitching her skirt to show her thighs.

He walked towards her through the harlequin chequered night. “Categorical Imperative”, said Kant restlessly in his sleep.

What is he talking about? said the young woman to herself as she examined his jacket. A poor Categorical Imperative he had been indeed. Why, he had fallen asleep like a child in her perfumed room. She stretched herself luxuriously, feeling energy like a strong red pulse in her body. She felt complete inside her envelope of flesh; she was very conscious of her own

languorous motions. At that moment she wasn't aware of age or of time. With money, what could one not do? One didn't need to bother thinking about a future: the future would take care of itself. As she watched the sleeping philosopher it angered her that he should have money and she none. Or at least he had more than she had. She had such a beautiful body, such taut pointed breasts, and his body was not powerful or muscular at

all. Ahead of her through the window she saw a single star winking in the sky. That might be Venus: she wasn't sure. Her mother had once told her, but she couldn't remember things like that. She took the golden watch from his pocket. She could sell it and this poor idiot would never notice its loss, or if he did he would not complain. She knew his kind, a respectable bourgeois to the very core.

The Fate of Timber

It withstood Swedish winters
until chainsaw and towropes
and bulldozer accounted for it.
A reduction past essentials.
Something called processing.
Then it was tightly rolled.

A year passes, and it finds itself
separated from a score of others
and hung up in a small room.
At irregular intervals the door slams.
Flesh appears. A voiding
there is no avoiding; then a hand

fumbles for reassurance. It grasps
and tears. Darkness. A crumpling,
an unholy compression. Shame
smears the universe. And then
a black hole swallows everything.
If there is a God, why does He allow

such suffering, such humiliation?
No tree deserves this
negation of its nobility,
this punishment without crime.
Once it knew such whiteness,
emptiness extending over limitless horizons

flecked by no doubt or betrayal.
Man is the only species to use
this device, this subtle torture.
The pulp mills gave little away. The rapid
log-jammed rivers seemed playful.
Even the searing blade had style.

Paul Groves

Reflections on “The Name of The Rose”

The Title & the Meaning



Since the publication of *The Name of the Rose* I have received a number of letters from readers who want to know the meaning of the final Latin hexameter and why this hexameter inspired the book's title. I answer that the verse is from *De contemptu mundi* by Bernard of Morlay, a 12th-century Benedictine, whose poem is a variation on the *ubi sunt* theme (most familiar in Villon's later *Mais où sont les neiges d'antan*). But to the usual *topos* (the great of yesteryear, the once-famous cities, the lovely princesses: everything disappears into the void), Bernard adds that all these departed things leave (only, or at least) pure names behind them. I remember that Abelard used the example of the sentence *Nulla rosa est* to demonstrate how language can speak of both the non-existent and the destroyed. And having said this, I leave the reader to arrive at his own conclusions.

A narrator should not supply interpretations of his work; otherwise he would not have written a novel, which is a machine for generating interpretations. But one of the chief obstacles to his maintaining this virtuous principle is the fact that a novel must have a title.

A title, unfortunately, is in itself a key to interpretation. We cannot escape the notions prompted by *The Red and the Black* or *War and Peace*. The titles that show most respect for the reader are those that confine themselves to the name of the hero, such as *David Copperfield* or *Robinson Crusoe*; but even this reference to the eponymous character can represent

an undue interference of the author. *Père Goriot* focuses the reader's attention on the figure of the old father, though the novel is also the story of Rastignac; or of Vautrin, alias Collin. Perhaps the best course is to be honestly dishonest, as Dumas was: it is clear that *The Three Musketeers* is, in reality, the tale of the fourth. But such a luxury is rare, and it may be that the author can allow himself to enjoy it only by mistake.

My novel had another, working title, which was *The Abbey of the Crime*. I rejected it because it concentrates the reader's attention entirely on the mystery story and might wrongly lure and mislead purchasers looking for an action-packed yarn. My dream was to call the book *Adso of Melk*—a totally neutral title, because Adso, after all, was the narrating voice. But in my country, publishers dislike proper names, and even *Fermo and Lucia*¹ was, in its day, recycled in a different form. Otherwise, Italian fiction offers few examples of this kind of title—*Lemmonio Bureo*, *Rubé*, *Metello*—a handful compared with the legion of Cousin Bettes, Barry Lyndons, Armances, and Tom Joneses that people other literatures.

THE IDEA of calling my book *The Name of the Rose* came to me virtually by chance, and I liked it because the rose is a symbolic figure so rich in meanings that by now it hardly has any meaning left: Dante's mystic rose, and go lovely rose, the Wars of the Roses, rose thou art sick, too many rings around Rosie, a rose by any other name,² a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose, the Rosicrucians. The title rightly disoriented the reader, who was unable to choose just one interpretation; and even if he were to catch the possible nominalist readings of the concluding verse, he would come to them only at the end, having previously made God only knows what other choices. A title must muddle the reader's ideas, not regiment them.

UMBERTO ECO, Professor of Semiotics at the University of Bologna, is a distinguished historian, philosopher, and aesthete. In "The Name of The Rose", a best-seller published two years ago in numerous translations and to multilingual acclaim, he has also given us a remarkable novel—his recreation of a medieval world in process of dissolution: "an inquiry where the object of detection is the destiny of man and his capacity to reason", as Anthony Hartley wrote in his *ENCOUNTER* review (March 1984). Eco's English publishers, Secker & Warburg, bring out on 9 April his "Reflections on 'The Name of The Rose'" (hardback £4.95, with illustrations; published in the States by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), immaculately translated from the Italian by William Weaver.

"The author must not interpret", says Eco. "But he may tell how and why he wrote his book."

¹ Original title of the first version of Manzoni's novel *I promessi sposi* (*The Betrothed*).

² It is curious that in America and the United Kingdom, the Latin verse reminded many reviewers of *Romeo and Juliet*. It is curious, because it seems to me that the sense of Juliet's words is exactly the opposite of that of Bernard's. Shakespeare suggests that names do not matter and do not affect the substance of the thing-in-itself. Bernard might have agreed with Shakespeare that names are only arbitrary labels, but for the Benedictine what remains of the real (?) rose (if any) is precisely this evanescent, powerful, fascinating, magical name.

Nothing is of greater consolation to the author of a novel than the discovery of readings he had not conceived but which are then prompted by his readers. When I wrote theoretical works, my attitude toward reviewers was judicial: Have they or have they not understood what I meant? With a novel, the situation is completely different. I am not saying that the author may not find a discovered reading perverse; but even if he does, he must remain silent, allow others to challenge it, text in hand. For that matter, the large majority of readings reveal effects of sense that one had not thought of. But what does not having thought of them mean?

A French scholar, Mireille Calle Gruber, has discovered subtle paragrams that link the *simple* (in the sense of the poor) with *simples* (in the sense of medicinal herbs); and then finds that I speak of the "tare" of heresy. I could reply that the term "simple", in both uses, recurs in the literature of the period, as does the expression "*mala pianta*", the tare, or poisonous herb, of heresy. Further, I was well aware of the example of Greimas on the possible double reading (semioticians call it "double isotopy") that occurs when the herbalist is referred to as a "friend of the simple." Did I know that I was playing with paragrams? It is of no importance to reply now: the text is there and produces its own effects of sense.

As I read the reviews of the novel, I felt a thrill of satisfaction when I found a critic (the first were Ginevra Bompiani and Lars Gustaffson) who quoted a remark of William's made at the end of the trial (page 385 in the English-language edition).

"What terrifies you most in purity?" Adso asks.

And William answers: "Haste."

I loved, and still love, these two lines very much. But then a reader pointed out to me that on the same page, Bernard Gui, threatening the cellarer with torture, says:

"Justice is not inspired by haste, as the Pseudo Apostles believe, and the justice of God has centuries at its disposal."

And the reader rightly asked me what connection I had meant to establish between the haste feared by William and the absence of haste extolled by Bernard. At that point I realised that a disturbing thing had happened. The exchange between Adso and William does not exist in the manuscript. I added this brief dialogue in the galleys, for reasons of concinnity: I needed to insert another scansion before giving Bernard the floor again. And naturally, as I was making William loathe haste (and with great conviction, which is why I then liked the remark very much), I completely forgot that, a little later, Bernard speaks of haste. If you reread Bernard's speech without William's, it becomes simply a stereotyped expression, the sort of thing we would expect from a judge, a commonplace on the order of "All are equal before the law." Alas, when juxtaposed with the haste mentioned by William, the haste mentioned by Bernard literally creates an effect of sense; and the reader is justified in wondering if the two men are saying the same thing, or if the loathing of haste expressed by William is not imperceptibly different from the loathing of haste expressed by Bernard. The text is there, and produces its own effects. Whether I wanted it this way or not, we are

now faced with a question, an ambiguous provocation; and I myself feel embarrassment in interpreting this conflict, though I realise a meaning lurks there (perhaps many meanings do).

The author should die once he has finished writing. So as not to trouble the path of the text.

Telling the Process



he author must not interpret. But he may tell why and how he wrote his book. So-called texts of poetics are not always useful in understanding the work that inspired them, but they help us understand how to solve the technical problem which is the production of a work.

Poe, in his "Philosophy of Composition", tells how he wrote "The Raven." He does not tell us how we should read it, but what problems he set himself in order to achieve a poetic effect. And I would define the poetic effect as the capacity that a text displays for continuing to generate different readings, without ever being completely consumed.

The writer (or painter or sculptor or composer) always knows what he is doing and how much it costs him. He knows he has to solve a problem. Perhaps the original data are obscure, pulsive, obsessive, no more than a yearning or a memory. But then the problem is solved at the writer's desk as he interrogates the material on which he is working—material that reveals natural laws of its own, but at the same time contains the recollection of the culture with which it is loaded (the echo of intertextuality).

When the author tells us he worked in a raptus of inspiration, he is lying. *Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.*

Talking about a famous poem of his, I forget which, Lamartine said that it had come to him in a single flash, on a stormy night, in a forest. When he died, the manuscripts were found, with revisions and variants; and the poem proved to be the most "worked out" in all of French literature.

When the writer (or the artist in general) says he has worked without giving any thought to the rules of the process, he simply means he was working without realising he knew the rules. A child speaks his mother tongue properly, though he could never write out its grammar. But the grammarian is not the only one who knows the rules of the language; they are well known, albeit unconsciously, also to the child. The grammarian is merely the one who knows how and why the child knows the language.

Telling how you wrote something does not mean proving it is "well" written. Poe said that the effect of the work is one thing and the knowledge of the process is another. When Kandinsky and Klee tell us how they paint, neither is saying he is better than the other. When Michelangelo says that sculpture amounts to freeing from the block of stone the figure already defined in it, he is not saying that the Vatican *Pietà* is superior to the Rondanini. Sometimes the most illuminating pages on the artistic process have been written by minor artists, who achieved modest effects but knew how to ponder their own processes: Vasari, Horatio Greenough, Aaron Copland. . . .

Naturally, the Middle Ages

Iwrote a novel because I had a yen to do it. I believe this is sufficient reason to set out to tell a story. Man is a storytelling animal by nature. I began writing in March of 1978, prodded by a seminal idea: I felt like poisoning a monk. I believe a novel is always born of an idea like this: the rest is flesh that is added along the way. The idea must have originated even earlier. Afterward, I found a notebook dated 1975 in which I had written down a list of monks in an unspecified monastery. Nothing else. At the beginning I read Orfila's *Traité des poisons*—which I had bought twenty years before at a book-stall by the Seine, purely out of loyalty to Huysmans (*Là-bas*). Since none of the poisons satisfied me, I asked a biologist friend to suggest a drug that possessed certain properties (the possibility of being absorbed by the skin when handled). I promptly tore up his letter of reply, in which he said he knew of no poison that would serve my purpose: it was a document that, read in another context, could lead to the gallows.

At first my monks were going to live in a contemporary convent (I had in mind an investigator-monk who read the left-wing newspaper *Il Manifesto*—in Italy even the Left has its own heretics). But in my convent or abbey, countless medieval memories survive, so I began rummaging among my files. After all, I was a medievalist in hibernation. (I had published a book on medieval aesthetics in 1956, another hundred pages on the subject in 1969, then a few scattered essays, and had returned to the medieval tradition in 1962 for my work on Joyce; in 1972 came a long study of the Apocalypse and the illuminations of the commentary by Beatus of Liébana;³ so the Middle Ages were kept limber.) I dug out a huge amount of material (file cards, photocopies, notebooks), accumulated since 1952 and originally intended for other, still vague, purposes: a history of monsters, or an analysis of medieval encyclopaedias, or a theory of lists. . . .

At a certain point I said to myself that, since the Middle Ages were my day-to-day fantasy, I might as well write a novel actually set in that period. As I have said in interviews, I know the present only through the television screen, whereas I have a direct knowledge of the Middle Ages. When we used to light bonfires on the grass in the country, my wife would accuse me of never looking at the sparks that flew up among the trees and glided along the electricity wires. Then when she read the chapter on the fire, she said "So you were looking at the sparks!" And I answered, "No, but I knew how a medieval monk would have seen them."

Ten years ago, in a letter from author to publisher accompanying my commentary on the commentary to the Apocalypse by Beatus of Liébana, I confessed (to Franco Maria Ricci):

"However you choose to look at it, I arrive at scholarship

³ Part of this text has been published in the second issue of the American edition of the magazine *FMR*.

⁴ Address of the Faculty of the Arts in medieval Paris. Rue du Fouarre, as referred to by Dante, *Paradiso*, X, 137 ("Straw Street" in Sayers-Reynolds translation).

by crossing symbolic forests inhabited by unicorns and gryphons, and by comparing the pinnacled and squared construction of cathedrals to the barbs of exegetic malice concealed in the tetragonal formulas of the Summulae, wandering between the 'Vico de le Strami'⁴ and Cistercian naves, engaging in affable colloquy with the cultivated and sumptuous Cluniac monks, under the surveillance of a plump and rationalistic Aquinas, tempted by Honorius Augustoduniensis, by his fantastic geographies, which explained simultaneously *quare in pueritia coitus non contingat* and how to reach the Lost Island, or how to capture a basilisk when you are armed only with a pocket mirror and unshakable faith in the Bestiary.

This taste and this passion have never abandoned me, even if later, for moral reasons and also material ones (being a medievalist usually implies having considerable wealth and the possibility of roaming among distant libraries, microfilming unheard-of manuscripts), I have pursued other things. And so the Middle Ages have remained, if not my profession, my hobby—and a constant temptation: I see the period everywhere, transparently overlaying my daily concerns, which do not look medieval, though they are.

Stolen holidays under the vaults of Autun, where the Abbé Grivot today writes manuals on the devil, their binding impregnated with sulphur, rustic ecstasies at Moissac and Conques, dazzled by the Elders of the Apocalypse or by the devils thrusting damned souls into boiling cauldrons; and, at the same time, refreshing study of the enlightened monk Bede, rational comforts sought in Occam, to understand the mystery of the Sign where Saussure is still obscure. And so on and on, with unceasing homesickness for the *Peregrinatio Sancti Brandani*, verifications of our thinking carried out through the Book of Kells, Borges revisited in the Celtic *kenningars*, relations between power and masses who have been persuaded checked against the diaries of Bishop Suger. . . ."

The Mask

Actually I decided not only to narrate *about* the Middle Ages. I decided to narrate *in* the Middle Ages, and through the mouth of a chronicler of the period. I was a novice narrator, and in the past I had looked at narrators from the opposite side of the barricade. I was embarrassed at telling a story. I felt like a drama critic who suddenly exposes himself behind the footlights and finds himself watched by those who, until then, have been his accomplices in the seats out front.

Is it possible to say "It was a beautiful morning at the end of November" without feeling like Snoopy? But what if I had Snoopy say it? If, that is, "It was a beautiful morning . . ." were said by someone capable of saying it, because in his day it was still possible, still not shopworn? A mask: that was what I needed.

I set about reading or rereading medieval chroniclers, to acquire their rhythm and their innocence. They would speak

for me, and I would be freed from suspicion. Freed from suspicion, but not from the echoes of intertextuality. Thus I rediscovered what writers have always known (and have told us again and again): books always speak of other books, and every story tells a story that has already been told. Homer knew this, and Ariosto knew this, not to mention Rabelais and Cervantes. My story, then, could only begin with the discovered manuscript, and even this would be (naturally) a quotation. So I wrote the introduction immediately, setting my narrative on a fourth level of encasement, inside three other narratives: I am saying what Vallet said that Mabillon said that Adso said. . . .

I was now free of every fear. And at this point I stopped writing for twelve months. I stopped because I discovered something else I already knew (and everyone knew), but that I came to understand more clearly as I worked.

I discovered, namely, that a novel has nothing to do with words in the first instance. Writing a novel is a cosmological matter, like the story told by Genesis (we all have to choose our role models, as Woody Allen puts it).

The Novel as Cosmological Event



What I mean is that to tell a story you must first of all construct a world, furnished as much as possible, down to the slightest details. If I were to construct a river, I would need two banks; and if on the left bank I put a fisherman, and if I were to give this fisherman a wrathful character and a police record, then I could start writing, translating into words everything that would inevitably happen. What does a fisherman do? He fishes (and thence a whole sequence of actions, more or less obligatory). And then what happens? Either the fish are biting or they are not. If they bite, the fisherman catches them and then goes home happy. End of story. If there are no fish, since he is a wrathful type he will perhaps become angry. Perhaps he will break his fishing-rod. This is not much; still, it is already a sketch.

But there is an Indian proverb that goes, "Sit on the bank of a river and wait: your enemy's corpse will soon float by." And what if a corpse were to come down the stream—since this possibility is inherent in an intertextual area like a river? We must also bear in mind that my fisherman has a police record. Will he want to risk trouble? What will he do? Will he run away and pretend not to have seen the corpse? Will he feel vulnerable, because this, after all, is the corpse of the man he hated? Wrathful as he is, will he fly into a rage because he was not able to wreak personally his longed-for vengeance?

As you see, as soon as one's invented world has been furnished just a little, there is already the beginning of a story. There is already the beginning of a style, too, because a fisherman who is fishing should establish a slow, fluvial pace, cadenced by his waiting, which should be patient but also marked by the fits of his impatient wrath. The problem is to

construct the world: the words will practically come on their own. *Rem tene, verba sequuntur*: grasp the subject, and the words will follow. This, I believe, is the opposite of what happens with poetry, which is more a case of *verba tene, res sequuntur*: grasp the words, and the subject will follow.

The first year of work on my novel was devoted to the construction of the world. Long registers of all the books that could be found in a medieval library. Lists of names and personal data for many characters, a number of whom were then excluded from the story. In other words, I had to know who the rest of the monks were, those who do not appear in the book. It was not necessary for the reader to know them, but I had to know them. Who ever said that fiction must compete with the city directory? Perhaps it must also compete with the planning board. Therefore I conducted long architectural investigations, studying photographs and floor plans in the encyclopaedia of architecture, to establish the arrangement of the abbey, the distances, even the number of steps in a spiral staircase. The film director Marco Ferreri once said to me that my dialogue is like a movie's because it lasts exactly the right length of time. It had to. When two of my characters spoke while walking from the refectory to the cloister, I wrote with the plan before my eyes; and when they reached their destination, they stopped talking.

It is necessary to create constraints, in order to invent freely. In poetry the constraint can be imposed by metre, foot, rhyme, by what has been called the "verse according to the ear."⁵ In fiction, the surrounding world provides the constraint. This has nothing to do with realism (even if it explains *also* realism). A completely unreal world can be constructed, in which asses fly and princesses are restored to life by a kiss; but that world, purely possible and unrealistic, must exist according to structures defined at the outset. We have to know whether it is a world where a princess can be restored to life only by the kiss of a prince, or also by that of a witch, and whether the princess's kiss transforms only frogs into princes or also, for example, armadillos.

One element of my world was history, and that is why I read and reread so many medieval chronicles; and as I read them, I realised that the novel had to include things that, in the beginning, had never crossed my mind, such as the debate over poverty and the Inquisition's hostility toward the Fraticelli.

FOR EXAMPLE: why are the 14th-century Fraticelli in my book? If I had to write a medieval story, I ought to have set it in the 12th or 13th century, because I knew them better than the 14th. But I needed an investigator, English if possible (intertextual quotation), with a great gift of observation and a special sensitivity in interpreting evidence. These qualities could be found only among the Franciscans, and only after Roger Bacon; furthermore, we find a developed theory of signs only with the Occamites. Or, rather, it also existed before, but either the interpretation of signs then was of a symbolic nature or else it tended to read ideas and notions in signs. It is only between Bacon and Occam that signs are used to acquire knowledge of individuals. So I had to set the story in the 14th century—much to my irritation, because I could

⁵ Charles Olson, "Projective Verse", *Poetry New York* 3 (1950).

not move easily in that period.

More reading ensued, with the discovery that a 14th-century Franciscan, even an Englishman, could not ignore the debate about poverty, especially if he was a friend, follower, or acquaintance of Occam. (I might add that initially the investigator was to have been Occam himself, but I gave up that idea, because I do not find the Venerable Inceptor very attractive as a human being.)

But why does everything take place at the end of November 1327? Because by December, Michael of Cesena is already in Avignon. (This is what I mean by furnishing a world in an historical novel: some elements, like the number of steps, can be determined by the author, but others, like the movements of Michael, depend on the real world, which, in this kind of novel, happens to coincide with the possible world of the story.)

But November is too early. I also needed to have a pig slaughtered. Why? The answer is simple: so that the corpse could be thrust, head down, into a great jar of blood. And why did I need this? Because the second trumpet of the Apocalypse says . . . I could not change the Apocalypse, after all; it was a part of this world. Now, it so happens (I made inquiries) that pigs are not slaughtered until cold weather comes, and November might be too early—unless I situated the abbey in the mountains, so there would already be snow. Otherwise my story might have taken place in the plains, at Pomposa, or at Conques.

The constructed world will then tell us how the story must proceed. Everyone asks me why my Jorge, with his name, suggests Borges, and why Borges is so wicked. But I cannot say. I wanted a blind man who guarded a library (it seemed a good narrative idea to me), and library plus blind man can only equal Borges, also because debts must be paid. And, further, it was through Spanish commentaries and illumination that the Apocalypse influenced the entire Middle Ages. But when I put Jorge in the library I did not yet know he was the murderer. He acted on his own, so to speak. And it must not be thought that this is an “idealistic” position, as if I were saying that the characters have an autonomous life and the author, in a kind of trance, makes them behave as they themselves direct him. That kind of nonsense belongs in term papers. The fact is that the characters are obliged to act according to the laws of the world in which they live. In other words, the narrator is the prisoner of his own premises.

Another fine story was that of the labyrinth. All the labyrinths I had heard of—and I had Santarcangeli’s excellent study at hand—were outdoor labyrinths. They could be extremely complicated and full of circumvolutions. But I needed an indoor labyrinth (have you ever seen an open-air library?), and if it was too complicated, with too many passages and inner rooms, not enough air would circulate, whereas circulation of air was necessary to feed the fire. (This, the fact that the Aedificium had to burn at the end, was very clear to me, but also for cosmological-historical reasons: in the Middle Ages, cathedrals and convents burned like tinder; imagining a medieval story without a fire is like imagining a World War II movie in the Pacific without a fighter plane shot down in flames.) So after I had worked for two or three months constructing a suitable labyrinth, I ended

up having to add some slits to make absolutely sure there would be enough air.

Who Speaks?



had many problems. I wanted an enclosed place, a concentrative universe; and to enclose it better, it seemed a good idea for me to introduce, besides unity of place, also unity of time (since the unity of action was doubtful). A Benedictine abbey, therefore, its life marked by the canonical hours. (*Ulysses* may have been an unconscious model, because of its structure rigidly bound by the hours of the day; but another was *The Magic Mountain*, with its mountainous, sanative situation, where so many conversations could take place.)

The conversations posed many problems for me, but I solved these as I wrote. There is a theme that has been scantily discussed in theories of narrative: that of the *turn ancillaries*—the devices, that is, through which the narrator grants the floor to the various characters. Look at the differences among these five exchanges:

1. “How are you?”
“Not bad. And you?”
2. “How are you?” John said.
“Not bad. And you?” Peter said.
3. “How”, John said, “are you?”
And Peter replied at once: “Not bad. And you?”
4. “How are you?” John inquired anxiously.
“Not bad. And you?” Peter cackled.
5. John said: “How are you?”
“Not bad”, Peter replied, in a dull voice. Then, with an enigmatic smile, he added: “And you?”

In all cases except the first two, we see that the author intrudes on the story, imposing his own point of view. He intervenes with a personal comment, to suggest how the words of the two speakers should be interpreted emotionally. But is this intention really absent from the first two, apparently aseptic, examples? And is the reader freer in these aseptic cases, where he could undergo an emotional imposition without being aware of it (remember the apparent neutrality of Hemingway dialogue), or is he freer in the other cases, where at least he knows the game the author is playing?

It is a problem of style, an ideological problem, a problem of “poetry”, like the choice of an internal rhyme or an assonance, or the introduction of a paragram. A certain coherence must be found. In my case it was perhaps made easier because all the dialogue is reported by Adso, and it is obvious that Adso imposes his own point of view on the whole narrative.

But the dialogue created another problem for me: how medieval could it be? In other words, as I was writing the book, I realised that it was taking on an opera-buffa structure, with long recitatives and elaborate arias. The arias (the description of the great door, for example) imitated the solemn rhetoric of the Middle Ages, and there was no dearth

of models for this. But the dialogue? At a certain point I feared it would sound like Agatha Christie, while the arias were Suger or Saint Bernard. I reread medieval romances, works from the age of chivalry, and I realised that, though I was taking just a bit of license, I was still respecting a narrative and poetic usage not unknown to the Middle Ages. But the problem tormented me for a long time and I am not sure I ever resolved these changes of register between aria and recitative.

Another problem: the encasement of the voices, or, rather of the narrative points of view. I knew that *I* was narrating a story with the words of another person, having declared in the preface that this person's words had been filtered through at least two other narrative points of view, that of Mabillon and that of the Abbé Vallet, even if they had supposedly operated only as philologists (but who believes that?). The problem arose again, however, with Adso's first-person narration. Adso, at the age of eighty, is telling about what he saw at the age of eighteen. Who is speaking, the eighteen-year-old Adso or the eighty-year-old? Both, obviously; and this is deliberate. The trick was to make the old Adso constantly present as he ponders what he remembers having seen and felt as the young Adso. The model (I did not reread the book: distant memories sufficed) was Serenus Zeitblom in *Doctor Faustus*. This enunciative duplicity fascinated and excited me very much. Also because—to return to what I was saying about the mask—in doubling Adso I was once more doubling the series of interstices, of screens, set between me as a biographical personality, me as narrating author, the first-person narrator, and the characters narrated, including the narrative voice. I felt more and more shielded, and the whole experience recalled to me (I mean physically, with the clarity of madeleine dipped in lime-flower tea) certain childish games in which I pretended I was in a submarine under the blankets and from it sent messages to my sister, under the blankets in the next bed, both of us cut off from the outside world and perfectly free to travel like a pair of ragged claws scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

Adso was very important for me. From the outset I wanted to tell the whole story (with its mysteries, its political and theological events, its ambiguities) through the voice of someone who experiences the events, records them all with the photographic fidelity of an adolescent, but does not understand them (and will not understand them fully even as an old man, since he then chooses a flight into the divine nothingness, which was not what his master had taught him)—to make everything understood through the words of one who understands nothing.

Reading the reviews, I realise that this is one of the aspects of the novel that impressed cultivated readers least; or, in any case, I would say that few made a point of it. But I wonder now if this was not one of the features that made the novel readable for unsophisticated readers. They identified with the innocence of the narrator, and felt exonerated even when they did not understand everything. I gave them back their fear and trembling in the face of sex, unknown languages,

difficulties of thought, mysteries of political life. . . . These are things I understand now, *après coup*; but perhaps I was then transferring to Adso many of my adolescent fears, certainly in his amorous palpitations (but always with the assurance that I could act through another person; in fact, Adso experiences his love sufferings only through the words with which the doctors of the Church discussed love). Art is an escape from personal emotion, as both Joyce and Eliot had taught me.

The struggle against emotion was hard. I wrote a beautiful prayer, modelled on the *Plaint of Nature* by Alanus de Insulis, to be said by William in a crucial moment. Then I realised that both of us would be overcome by emotion. I as author and he as character. I as author should not succumb, for reasons of poetics. He as character could not, because he was made of different stuff, and his emotions were all mental, or repressed. So I cut that page. After a friend of mine had read the book, she said to me, "My only objection is that William never has a twinge of pity." I quoted this to another friend, and he said, "That's right, that is the style of his pity." Perhaps this is so. And so be it.

Preterition



Adso was also useful to me in dealing with another matter. I could have had the story unfold in a Middle Ages where everyone knew what was being talked about, as in a contemporary story, in which, if a character says the Church would not approve his divorce, it is not necessary to explain what the Church is and why it does not approve the divorce. But in an historical novel this cannot be done, because the purpose of the narration is also to make clearer to us contemporaries what happened then and how what happened then matters to us as well.

Hence the risk of what I would call Salgarism.⁶ When the characters in Emilio Salgari's adventures escape through the forest, pursued by enemies, and stumble over a baobab root, the narrator suspends the action in order to give us a botany lesson on the baobab. Now this has become *topos*, charming, like the defects of those we have loved; but it should not be done.

I rewrote hundreds of pages to avoid this kind of lapse, but I do not recall ever realising quite how I solved the problem. I became aware of it only two years afterward, when I was trying to figure out why the book was being read by people who surely could not like such "cultivated" books. Adso's narrative style is based on that rhetorical device called preterition or paralepsis, or "passing over." Here is an example from Tudor times: "I doe not say that thou receaved byrbes of thy fellowes, I busie myself not in this thing. . . ." The speaker, in other words, claims he will not speak of something that everyone knows perfectly well, and as he is saying this, he speaks of the thing. This is more or less the way Adso mentions people and events as being well known but still does speak of them. As for those people and events that Adso's reader, a German at the end of the century, could not know, since they had taken place in Italy at the beginning of the century, Adso discusses them without hesitation, and

⁶ Emilio Salgari was a well-known popular Italian author of the late 19th century who wrote innumerable books of exotic adventures.

in a didactic tone, because this was the style of the medieval chronicler, eager to introduce encyclopaedic notions every time something was mentioned. After a friend (not the same one as before) had read the manuscript, she told me she had been struck by the journalistic tone of the story, which was not the tone of a novel but that of a newspaper article. At first I was offended; then I realised what she had unwittingly perceived. This is how the chroniclers of those centuries tell things. And if the Italians still use the word *cronaca* to define the local-news page in the papers, it is because chronicles have gone on being written over the centuries.

Pace

ut there was another reason for including those long didactic passages. After reading the manuscript, my friends and editors suggested I abbreviate the first hundred pages, which they found very difficult and demanding. Without thinking twice, I refused, because, as I insisted, if somebody wanted to enter the abbey and live there for seven days, he had to accept the abbey's own pace. If he could not, he would never manage to read the whole book. Therefore those first hundred pages are like a penance or an initiation, and if someone does not like them, so much the worse for him. He can stay at the foot of the hill.

Entering a novel is like going on a climb in the mountains: you have to learn the rhythm of respiration, acquire the pace; otherwise you stop right away. The same thing is true of poetry. Just recall how unbearable poems become when they are recited by actors, who, wanting to "interpret", ignore the metre of the verse, making dramatic *enjambements* as if they were declaiming prose, concern themselves with the content and not with the rhythm. To read a classical poem in rhyme, you have to assume the singing rhythm the poet wanted. It is better to recite Dante as if he had written children's jingles than pursue only his meanings to the exclusion of everything else.

In narrative, the breathing is derived not from the sentences but from broader units, from the scansion of events. Some novels breathe like gazelles, others like whales or elephants. Harmony lies not in the length of the breath but in its regularity. And if, at a certain point (but this should not occur too often), the breathing breaks off and a chapter (or a sequence) ends before the breath is completely drawn, this irregularity can play an important role in the economy of the story; it can mark a turning point, a surprise development. At least this is what we find in great writers. A great novel is one in which the author always knows just where to accelerate, when to apply the brakes, and how to handle the clutch, within a basic rhythm that remains constant. In music there is *rubato*, but if you rob too much, you end up like those bad performers who believe that exaggerated *rubato* is all you need to play Chopin. I am not talking about how I solved my problems, but about how I posed them. And if I were to say I posed them consciously, I would be lying. There is a compositive thought that thinks even in the rhythm of fingers tapping on the keys of the typewriter.

I would like to give an example of how storytelling means thinking with your fingers. Obviously, the lovemaking scene in the kitchen is constructed entirely on the basis of quotations from religious texts, from the *Song of Songs* to Saint Bernard and Jean de Fécamp, or Saint Hildegard of Bingen. Even readers unfamiliar with the medieval mystics realised this, if they had any ear. But now, if someone asks me the source of the quotations or where one ends and another begins, I cannot answer.

In fact, I had dozens and dozens of file cards with all sorts of texts, and sometimes pages of books, photocopies—countless, far more than I used. But when I wrote the scene, I wrote it all in one sitting (I polished it later, as if to cover it with a uniform finish, so the seams would be less visible). So, as I was writing, I had at my elbow all the texts, flung in no order; and my eye would fall first on this one and then on that, as I copied out a passage, immediately linking it to another. In first draft, I wrote this chapter more quickly than any of the others. I realised afterward that I was trying to follow with my fingers the rhythm of Adso's lovemaking, and therefore I could not pause to select the most cogent quotation. What made the quotation cogent at that point was the pace at which I inserted it. I rejected with my eyes those quotations that would have arrested the rhythm of my fingers. I cannot say that the writing of the action lasted as long as the action (for there are times when lovemaking lasts fairly long), but I tried to shorten as much as possible the difference between the duration of the scene and the duration of the writing. And I say "writing" not in the Barthesian sense, but in the typewriter's sense: I mean writing as a physical, material act, and I am speaking of the rhythms of the body, not of emotions. The emotion, filtered at this point, had all come before, with the decision to liken mystic ecstasy to erotic ecstasy; it had come when I first read and chose the text to be employed. Afterward, there was no emotion. Adso was making love, not I. I had only to translate *his* emotion into a movement of eyes and fingers, as if I had decided to tell a story of love by playing the drum.

Constructing the Reader

hythm, pace, penitence. . . . For whom? For me? No, certainly not. For the reader. While you write, you are thinking of a reader, as the painter, while he paints, is thinking of the viewer who will look at the picture. After making a brush stroke, he takes two or three steps back and studies the effect: he looks at the picture, that is, the way the viewer will admire it, in proper lighting, when it is hanging on a wall. When a work is finished, a dialogue is established between the text and its readers (the author is excluded). While a work is in progress, the dialogue is double: there is the dialogue between that text and all other previously written texts (books are made only from other books and around other books), and there is the dialogue between the author and his model reader. I have theorised about this in other works, such as *The Role of the Reader* and, before that, in *Opera aperta*; nor was I the inventor of the idea.

It may be that when he writes the author has a certain empirical audience in mind; this is how the founders of the modern novel wrote—Richardson, Fielding, Defoe—who were writing for merchants and their wives. But Joyce, too, is writing for an audience, imagining an ideal reader affected by an ideal insomnia. In both cases, whether the writer believes he is writing for a public standing there, money in hand, just outside the door, or whether he means to write for a reader still to come, writing means constructing, through the text, one's own model reader.

What does it mean, to imagine a reader able to overcome the penitential obstacle of the first hundred pages? It means, precisely, writing one hundred pages for the purpose of constructing a reader suitable for what comes afterward.

Is there a writer who writes only for posterity? No, not even if he says so himself, because, since he is not Nostradamus, he can conceive of posterity only on the model of what he knows of his contemporaries. Is there a writer who writes only for a handful of readers? Yes, if by this you mean that the model reader he imagines has slight chance of being made flesh in any number. But even this writer writes in the hope, not all that secret, that his book itself will create, and in great quantity, many new exemplars of this reader, desired and pursued with such craftsmanlike precision, and postulated, encouraged, by his text.

If there is a difference, it lies between the text that seeks to produce a new reader and the text that tries to fulfil the wishes of the readers already to be found in the street. In the latter case we have the book written, constructed, according to an effective, mass-production formula; the author carries out a kind of market analysis and adapts his work to its results. Even from a distance, it is clear that he is working by a formula; you have only to analyse the various novels he has written and you note that in all them, after changing names, places, distinguishing features, he has told the same story—the one that the public was already asking of him.

But when a writer plans something new, and conceives a different kind of reader, he wants to be, not a market analyst, cataloguing expressed demands, but, rather, a philosopher, who senses the patterns of the *Zeitgeist*. He wants to reveal to his public what it *should* want, even if it does not know it. He wants to reveal the reader to himself.

If Manzoni had been thinking of the public's wishes, he would have had the formula handy: the historical novel with a medieval setting, with illustrious characters as in Greek tragedy, kings and princesses (and is this not what he did in *Adelchi*?), great and noble passions, heroic battles, and a celebration of Italian glories from a period when Italy was a land of the strong. Is this not what so many historical novelists, now more or less forgotten, had done in his day, or before him: writers like the artisan d'Azeglio, the fiery and lutulent Guerrazzi, the unreadable Cantù?

But what does Manzoni do instead? He choses the 17th century, a period of servitude, and lowly characters, and the only swordsman is a scoundrel. Manzoni tells of no battles, and dares weigh his story down with documents and proclamations. . . . And people like him, everyone likes him, learned and ignorant, old and young, devout and anticlerical, because he sensed that the readers of his day had to have *that*,

even if they did not know it, even if they did not ask for it, even if they did not believe it was fit for consumption. And how hard he had to work, with hammer and saw and plane, and dictionary, to make his product palatable. To force empirical readers to become the model reader he yearned for.

Manzoni did not write to please the public as it was, but to create a public who could not help liking his novel. And woe to them if they had not liked it. With supreme hypocrisy and serenity he referred to his "twenty-five readers"; it was twenty-five million he wanted.

WHAT MODEL READER did I want as I was writing? An accomplice, to be sure, one who would play my game. I wanted to become completely medieval and live in the Middle Ages as if that were my own period (and vice versa). But at the same time, with all my might, I wanted to create a type of reader who, once the initiation was past, would become my prey—or, rather, the prey of the text—and would think he wanted nothing but what the text was offering him. A text is meant to be an experience of transformation for its reader. You believe you want sex and a criminal plot where the guilty party is discovered at the end, and all with plenty of action, but at the same time you would be ashamed to accept old-fashioned rubbish made up of the living dead, nightmare abbeys, and black penitents. All right, then, I will give you Latin, practically no women, lots of theology, gallons of blood in Grand Guignol style, to make you say, "But all this is false; I refuse to accept it!" And at this point you will have to be mine, and feel the thrill of God's infinite omnipotence, which makes the world's order vain. And then, if you are good, you will realise how I lured you into this trap, because I was really telling you about it at every step, I was carefully warning you that I was dragging you to your damnation; but the fine thing about pacts with the devil is that when you sign them you are well aware of their conditions. Otherwise why would you be recompensed with hell?

And since I wanted you to feel as pleasurable the one thing that frightens us—namely, the metaphysical shudder—I had only to choose (from among the model plots) the most metaphysical and philosophical: the detective novel.

The Detective Metaphysic



It is no accident that the book starts out as a mystery (and continues to deceive the ingenuous reader until the end, so the ingenuous reader may not even realise that this is a mystery in which very little is discovered and the detective is defeated). I believe people like thrillers not because there are corpses or because there is a final celebratory triumph of order (intellectual, social, legal and moral) over the disorder of evil. The fact is that the crime novel represents a kind of conjecture, pure and simple. But medical diagnosis, scientific research, metaphysical inquiry are also examples of conjecture. After all, the fundamental question of philosophy (like that of psychoanalysis) is the same as the question of the detective novel: who is guilty? To know this (to think you

know this), you have to conjecture that all the events have a logic, the logic that the guilty party has imposed on them. Every story of investigation and of conjecture tells us something that we have always been close to knowing (pseudo-Heideggerian reference). At this point it is clear why my basic story (whodunit?) ramifies into so many other stories, all stories of other conjectures, all linked with the structure of conjecture as such.

An abstract model of conjecturality is the labyrinth. But there are three kinds of labyrinth. One is the Greek, the labyrinth of Theseus. This kind does not allow anyone to get lost: you go in, arrive at the centre, and then from the centre you reach the exit. This is why in the centre there is the Minotaur; if he were not there the story would have no zest, it would be a mere stroll. Terror is born, if it is born, from the fact that you do not know where you will arrive or what the Minotaur will do. But if you unravel the classical labyrinth, you find a thread in your hand, the thread of Ariadne. The classical labyrinth is the Ariadne's-thread of itself.

Then there is the mannerist maze: if you unravel it, you find in your hands a kind of tree, a structure with roots, with many blind alleys. There is only one exit, but you can get it wrong. You need an Ariadne's-thread to keep from getting lost. This labyrinth is a model of the trial-and-error process.

And finally there is the net, or, rather, what Deleuze and Guattari call "rhizome." The rhizome is so constructed that every path can be connected with every other one. It has no centre, no periphery, no exit, because it is potentially infinite. The space of conjecture is a rhizome space. The labyrinth of my library is still a mannerist labyrinth, but the world in which William realises he is living already has a rhizome structure: that is, it can be structured but is never structured definitively.

A seventeen-year-old boy told me he understood nothing of the theological arguments, but they acted as extensions of the spatial labyrinth (as if they were the "suspense" music in a Hitchcock film). I believe that something like this happened: even the ingenuous reader sensed that he was dealing with a story of labyrinths, and not only of spatial labyrinths. We could say that, strangely, the most ingenuous readings were the most "structural": the ingenuous reader entered into direct contact, beyond any mediation of content, with the fact that it is impossible for there to be a story.

Enjoyment

 wanted the reader to enjoy himself, at least as much as I was enjoying myself. This is a very important point, which seems to conflict with the more thoughtful ideas we believe we have about the novel.

The reader was to be diverted, but not di-verted, distracted from problems. *Robinson Crusoe* is meant to divert its own model reader, telling him about the calculations and the daily actions of a sensible *homo oeconomicus* much like himself. But Robinson's *semblable*, after he has enjoyed reading about himself in the novel, should somehow have understood something more, become another person. In amusing

himself, somehow, he has learned. The reader should learn something either about the world or about language: this difference distinguishes various narrative poetics, but the point remains the same. The ideal reader of *Finnegans Wake* must, finally, enjoy himself as much as the reader of Erle Stanley Gardner. Exactly as much, but in a different way.

Now, the concept of amusement is historical. There are different means of amusing and of being amused for every season in the history of the novel. Unquestionably, the modern novel has sought to diminish amusement resulting from the plot in order to enhance other kinds of amusement. As a great admirer of Aristotle's *Poetics*, I have always thought that, no matter what, a novel must also—especially—amuse through its plot.

There is no question that if a novel is amusing, it wins the approval of a public. Now, for a certain period, it was thought that this approval was a bad sign: if a novel was popular, this was because it said nothing new and gave the public only what the public was already expecting.

I believe, however, that to say, "If a novel gives the reader what he was expecting, it becomes popular", is different from saying, "If a novel is popular, this is because it gives the reader what he was expecting of it."

The second statement is not always true. It is enough to recall Defoe and Balzac or, more recently, *The Tin Drum* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

It can be said that the "popularity = lack of value" equation was supported by the polemical attitudes of some writers, including me, who formed the *Gruppo 63* in Italy. And even before 1963 the successful book was identified with the escape novel, and the escape novel with the plot novel; while the experimental works, novels that caused scandal and were rejected by the mass audience, were praised. These things were said, and there was a reason for saying them. These were the statements that most shocked respectable readers, and reporters have never forgotten them—and rightly, because these things were said precisely to achieve such an effect. We were talking about traditional novels with a fundamentally escapist structure, with no interesting innovations with respect to the problems discussed in 19th-century novels. And inevitably factions were formed, and good and bad were often lumped together, sometimes for reasons of factional dispute. I remember that the enemies then were Lampedusa, Bassani, and Cassola. Today, personally, I would make subtle distinctions among the three. Lampedusa had written a good, anachronistic novel, and our dispute was with those who hailed it as the opening of a new path for Italian literature, whereas it was, on the contrary, the glorious conclusion of an old path. My opinion of Cassola has remained unchanged. With Bassani, on the other hand, I would now be far more cautious; and if we were back in 1963, I would greet him as a fellow traveller. But the problem I want to discuss is something else.

Nobody remembers what happened in 1965 when the *Gruppo* met a second time, in Palermo, to discuss the experimental novel (and yet the proceedings are still in print, entitled *Il romanzo sperimentale*, published by Feltrinelli, with the date 1965 on the cover and 1966 in the colophon). Now, in the course of that debate many interesting things

emerged. First of all, in his opening paper Renato Barilli, theoretician of all the experimentalism of the *nouveau roman*, had to come to grips with Robbe-Grillet, with Grass, with Pynchon (it must not be forgotten that though Pynchon is now considered one of the inventors of post-modernism, the term did not exist then—not in Italy, anyway—and John Barth was just getting started in America). Barilli mentioned the rediscovered Roussel, who loved Verne, but he did not mention Borges, because *his* rediscovery was yet to come. And what did Barilli say? That till then abolition of plots and action had been encouraged, in favour of the pure epiphany in its extreme form of "materialistic ecstasy" (we might say, "I will show you the heavens in a handful of dust", as in the paintings of Pollock or Dubuffet or Fautrier). But now a new phase of narrative was beginning: action was being sanctioned again, even though it was an *autre* action.

I was analysing the impression we had got the previous evening, watching a curious collage movie by Baruchello and Grifi called *Verifica incerta*, a story composed of fragments of stories, or, rather, of standard situations, *topoi*, from commercial cinema. And I pointed out that the places where the spectators had reacted with the greatest pleasure were those where, until a few years ago, they would have reacted with shock and outrage—namely, where the logical and temporal consequences of traditional action were omitted and the public's expectations might have seemed violently frustrated. Avant-garde was becoming tradition: what had been dissonance a few years before was turning into a balm for the ears (or for the eyes). And from this observation only one conclusion could be drawn: unacceptability of the message was no longer the prime criterion for an experimental fiction (or any other art), since unacceptability had now been codified as entertaining. And I remarked that, whereas at the time of the futurists' programme it had been indispensable for the audience to boo:

"sterile, today, and foolish is the polemic of those who consider an experiment a failure because of the fact that it is accepted as normal: this means going backward to the worn-out Utopia of the early avant-garde. We insist that the unacceptability of the message on the part of the recipient is a guarantee of value only in a specific historic moment. . . . I suspect that we will perhaps have to give up that *arrière-pensée*, which constantly dominates our discussions, whereby an external scandal caused by a work can be considered a guarantee of its worth. The very dichotomy between order and disorder, between a work for popular consumption and a work for provocation, though it remains valid, should perhaps be re-examined from another point of view. In other words, I believe it will be possible to find elements of revolution and contestation in works that apparently lend themselves to facile consumption, and it will also be possible to realise, on the contrary, that certain works, which seem provocative and still enrage the public, do not really contest anything. . . . Just recently I met someone who, because he had liked a certain product *too much*, had relegated it to a zone of suspicion. . . ."

And so on.

Nineteen sixty-five. That was the time when Pop Art was beginning, and the traditional distinctions between experimental, non-figurative art and mass art, narrative and figurative, were vanishing. This was when Pousseur, referring to the Beatles, said to me, "They are working for us"—not realising, however, that he was also working for them (and it took the initiative of Cathy Berberian to show us that the Beatles, linked with Purcell, as was only right, could also be performed in recital with Monteverdi and Satie).

Post-modernism, Irony, the Enjoyable

etween 1965 and today, two ideas have been definitively clarified: that plot could be found also in the form of quotations of other plots, and that the quotation could be less escapist than the plot quoted. In 1972 I edited the *Almanacco Bompiani*, celebrating "The Return to the Plot", though this return was via an ironic re-examination (not without admiration) of Ponson du Terrail and Eugène Sue, and admiration (with very little irony) of some of the great pages of Dumas. The real problem at stake then was, could there be a novel that was not escapist and, nevertheless, still enjoyable?

This link, and the rediscovery not only of plot but also of enjoyability, was to be realised by the American theorists of post-modernism.

Unfortunately, "post-modern" is a term *bon à tout faire*. I have the impression that it is applied today to anything the user of the term happens to like. Further, there seems to be an attempt to make it increasingly retroactive: first it was apparently applied to certain writers or artists active in the last twenty years, then gradually it reached the beginning of the century, then still further back. And this reverse procedure continues; soon the post-modern category will include Homer.

Actually, I believe that post-modernism is not a trend to be chronologically defined, but, rather, an ideal category—or, better still, a *Kunstwollen*, a way of operating. We could say that every period has its own post-modernism, just as every period would have its own mannerism (and, in fact, I wonder if post-modernism is not the modern name for mannerism as metahistorical category). I believe that in every period there are moments of crisis like those described by Nietzsche in his *Thoughts Out of Season*, in which he wrote about the harm done by historical studies. The past conditions us, harries us, blackmails us. The historic avant-garde (but here I would also consider avant-garde a metahistorical category) tries to settle scores with the past. "Down with moonlight"—a futurist slogan—is a platform typical of every avant-garde; you have only to replace "moonlight" with whatever noun is suitable. The avant-garde destroys, defaces the past: *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* is a typical avant-garde act. Then the avant-garde goes further, destroys the figure, cancels it, arrives at the abstract, the informal, the white canvas, the slashed canvas, the charred canvas. In architecture and the visual arts, it will be the curtain wall, the building as stele, pure parallelepiped, minimal art; in literature, the destruction of

the flow of discourse, the Burroughs-like collage, silence, the white page; in music, the passage from atonality to noise to absolute silence (in this sense, the early Cage is modern).

But the moment comes when the avant-garde (the modern) can go no further, because it has produced a metalanguage that speaks of its impossible texts (conceptual art). The post-modern reply to the modern consists of recognising that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently.

I THINK OF THE post-modern attitude as that of a man who loves a very cultivated woman and knows he cannot say to her, "I love you madly", because he knows that she knows (and that she knows that he knows) that these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland. Still, there is a solution. He can say, "As Barbara Cartland would put it, I love you madly." At this point, having avoided false innocence, having said clearly that it is no longer possible to speak innocently, he will nevertheless have said what he wanted to say to the woman: that he loves her, but he loves her in an age of lost innocence. If the woman goes along with this, she will have received a declaration of love all the same. Neither of the two speakers will feel innocent, both will have accepted the challenge of the past, of the already said, which cannot be eliminated; both will consciously and with pleasure play the game of irony. . . . But both will have succeeded, once again, in speaking of love.

IRONY, METALINGUISTIC PLAY, enunciation squared. Thus, with the modern, anyone who does not understand the game can only reject it, but with the post-modern, it is possible not to understand the game and yet to take it seriously. Which is, after all, the quality (the risk) of irony. There is always someone who takes ironic discourse seriously. I think that the collages of Picasso, Juan Gris, and Braque were modern: this is why normal people would not accept them. On the other hand, the collages of Max Ernst, who pasted together bits of 19th-century engravings, were post-modern: they can be read as fantastic stories, as the telling of dreams, without any awareness that they amount to a discussion of the nature of engraving, and perhaps even of collage. If "post-modern" means this, it is clear why Sterne and Rabelais were post-modern, why Borges surely is, and why in the same artist the modern moment and the post-modern moment can coexist, or alternate, or follow each other closely. Look at Joyce. The *Portrait* is the story of an attempt at the modern. *Dubliners*, even if it comes before, is more modern than *Portrait*. *Ulysses* is on the borderline. *Finnegans Wake* is already post-modern, or at least it initiates the post-modern discourse: it demands, in order to be understood, not the negation of the already said, but its ironic rethinking.

On the subject of the post-modern nearly everything has been said, from the very beginning (namely, in essays like "The Literature of Exhaustion" by John Barth, which dates from 1967). Not that I am entirely in agreement with the grades that the theoreticians of post-modernism (Barth included) give to writers and artists, establishing who is post-modern and who has not yet made it. But I am interested in the theorem that the trend's theoreticians derive from their premises:

"My ideal post-modernist author neither merely repudiates nor merely imitates either his 20th-century modernist parents or his 19th-century pre-modernist grandparents. He has the first half of our century under his belt, but not on his back. . . . He may not hope to reach and move the devotees of James Michener and Irving Wallace—not to mention the lobotomised mass-media illiterates. But he *should* hope to reach and delight, at least part of the time, beyond the circle of what Mann used to call the Early Christians: professional devotees of high art. . . . The ideal post-modernist novel will somehow rise above the quarrel between realism and irrealism, formalism and 'contentism', pure and committed literature, coterie fiction and junk fiction. . . . My own analogy would be with good jazz or classical music: one finds much on successive listenings or close examination of the score that one didn't catch the first time through; but the first time through should be so ravishing—and not just to specialists—that one delights in the replay."

This is what Barth wrote in 1980, resuming the discussion, but this time under the title "The Literature of Replenishment: Postmodernist Fiction."⁷ Naturally, the subject can be discussed further, with a greater taste for paradox; and this is what Leslie Fiedler does. In 1980 *Salmagundi* (Nos 50-51) published a debate between Fiedler and other American authors. Fiedler, obviously, is out to provoke. He praises *The Last of the Mohicans*, adventure stories, Gothic novels, junk scorned by critics that was nevertheless able to create myths and capture the imagination of more than one generation. He wonders if something like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* will ever appear again, a book that can be read with equal passion in the kitchen, the living-room, and the nursery. He includes Shakespeare among those who know how to amuse, along with *Gone with the Wind*. We all know he is too keen a critic to believe these things. He simply wants to break down the barrier that has been erected between art and enjoyability. He feels that today reaching a vast public and capturing its dreams perhaps means acting as the avant-garde, and he still leaves us free to say that capturing readers' dreams does not necessarily mean encouraging escape it can also mean haunting them.

The Historical Novel



For two years I have refused to answer idle questions on the order of "Is your novel an open work or not?" How should I know? That is your business, not mine. Or "With which of your

⁷ Both essays are reprinted in *The Literature of Exhaustion* (Lord John Press, Northridge, California, 1982).

characters do you identify?" For God's sake, with whom does an author identify? With the adverbs, obviously.

Of all idle questions the most idle has been the one raised by those who suggest that writing about the past is a way of eluding the present. "Is that true?" they ask me. It is quite likely, I answer: if Manzoni wrote about the 17th century, that means the 19th century did not interest him. Shakespeare rewrote medieval subjects and was not concerned with his own time, whereas *Love Story* is firmly committed to its own time, yet *La Chartreuse de Parme* told only of events that had occurred a good twenty-five years earlier. . . . It is no use saying that all the problems of modern Europe took the shape in which we still feel them during the Middle Ages: communal democracy and the banking economy, national monarchies and urban life, new technologies and rebellions of the poor. The Middle Ages are our infancy, to which we must always return, for anamnesis. But there is also the *Excalibur*-style Middle Ages. And so the problem is something else that cannot be skirted. What does writing an historical novel mean? I believe there are three ways of narrating the past. One is *romance*, and the examples range from the Breton cycle to Tolkien, also including the Gothic novel, which is not a novel but a romance. The past as scenery, pretext, fairy-tale construction, to allow the imagination to rove freely. In this sense, a romance does not necessarily have to take place in the past; it must only not take place here and now, and the here and now must not be mentioned, not even as allegory. Much science fiction is pure romance. Romance is the story of an *elsewhere*.

THEN COMES the swashbuckling novel, the cloak-and-dagger stories, like the work of Dumas. This kind of novel chooses a "real" and recognisable past, and, to make it recognisable, the novelist peoples it with characters already found in the encyclopaedia (Richelieu, Mazarin), making them perform actions that the encyclopaedia does not record (meeting Milady, consorting with a certain Bonacieux) but which the encyclopaedia does not contradict. Naturally, to corroborate the illusion of reality, the historical characters will also do what (as historiography concurs) they actually did (besiege La Rochelle, have intimate relations with Anne of Austria, deal with the Fronde). In this ("real") picture the imaginary characters are introduced, though they display feelings that could also be attributed to characters of other periods. What d'Artagnan does, in recovering the Queen's jewels in London, he could have done as well in the 15th century or the 18th. It is not necessary to live in the 17th century to have the psychology of d'Artagnan.

In the historical novel, on the other hand, it is not necessary for characters recognisable in normal encyclopaedias to appear. Take *The Betrothed*: the best-known real character is Cardinal Federigo, who, until Manzoni came along, was a name known only to a few people (the other Borromeo, Saint Charles, was the famous one). But everything that Renzo, Lucia, or Fra Cristoforo does could be done only in Lombardy in the 17th century. What the characters do serves to make history, what happened, more comprehensible. Events and characters are made up, yet they tell us

things about the Italy of the period that history books have never told us so clearly.

In this sense, certainly, I wanted to write a historical novel, and not because Ubertino or Michael had really existed and had said more or less what they say, but because everything the fictitious characters like William say *ought* to have been said in that period.

I DO NOT KNOW how faithful I remained to this purpose. I do not believe I was neglecting it when I disguised quotations from later authors (such as Wittgenstein), passing them off as quotations from the period. In those instances I knew very well that it was not my medieval men who were being modern; if anything, it was the moderns who were thinking mediocrally. Rather, I ask myself if at times I did not endow my fictitious characters with a capacity for putting together, from the *disiecta membra* of totally medieval thoughts, some conceptual hircocervuses that, in this form, the Middle Ages would not have recognised as their own. But I believe an historical novel should do this, too: not only identify in the past the causes of what came later, but also trace the process through which those causes began slowly to produce their effects.

If a character of mine, comparing two medieval ideas, produces a third, more modern, idea, he is doing exactly what culture did; and if nobody has ever written what he says, someone, however confusedly, should surely have begun to think it (perhaps without saying it, blocked by countless fears and by shame).

In any case, there is one matter that has amused me greatly: every now and then a critic or a reader writes to say that some character of mine declares things that are too modern, and in every one of these instances, and only in these instances, I was actually quoting 14th-century texts.

And there are other pages in which readers appreciated the exquisite medieval quality whereas I felt those pages are illegitimately modern. The fact is that everyone has his own ideas, usually corrupt, of the Middle Ages. Only we monks of the period know the truth, but saying it can sometimes lead to the stake.

Ending

I FOUND AGAIN—two years after having written the novel—a note I made in 1953, when I was still a student at the university.

"Horatio and his friend called the Count of P. to solve the mystery of the ghost. The Count of P., eccentric and phlegmatic gentleman. Opposed to him, a young captain of the Danish guards, with FBI methods. Normal development of the action following the lines of the tragedy. In the last act the Count of P., having gathered the family together, explains the mystery: the murderer is Hamlet. Too late, Hamlet dies."

Years later I discovered that Chesterton had somewhere suggested an idea of the sort. It seems that the Parisian

Oulipo group⁸ has recently constructed a matrix of all

possible murder-story situations and has found that there is still to be written a book in which the murderer is the reader.

⁸ *Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle*, organised by Queneau, Le Lyonnais, Perec, and others to produce literature by mathematical combinatory means.

Moral: there exist obsessive ideas, they are never personal; books talk among themselves, and any true detection should prove that we are the guilty party.

Encounter at a Greyhound Bus Station

If belief, like heaven, lies beyond the facts
what serpent flies with an ant between its teeth?

asked the over-bearded man with closed eyes.
Who are they who descend when they ascend?

this kabbalist with eyes closed, asked.
Are all men in disguise except those crying?

And what exists in a tree that doesn't exist,
its eggs looted by creatures not yet created?

*

Partial to paradoxes, disliking riddles,
I hummed and I hawed, I advocated

the secrets of lucidity. Then said,
Some talk in their sleep, very few sing.

Abruptly, the unwashed one, opened his lids,
rattled one coin inside a tin.

I looked into the splendour of his eyes
and laid my hand upon my mouth.

*

Then he scoffed: you are like the deaf man
who knows nothing of music or of dance

yet blurts out, observing musicians play
and dancers dance—Stupid, how stupid

those who carve the air this way and that,
who blow out their cheeks to make them fat,

who mill about, clutch and maul each other
as if the very earth and all would fall.

*

And what could I, secular, say to that?
That I'm deaf to God but not in combat?

Cool pretensions of reason he'd dismiss
and if I threw stones he'd build a house.

Yet I begged: Dare to reveal, sir, not conceal;
not all, translucent, lose authority.

Fool, he replied, I'm empty, feed my tin,
which I did, of course, when the bus came in.

Dannie Abse

Michael Howard

Is Winston Churchill Still Relevant?

Crisis in the Era of National Unity



WHEN NATIONS commemorate great men, they nearly always choose those whose work was significant in the creation of the nation itself. We may count ourselves fortunate when a great artist or scholar or scientist is born an Englishman, but we seldom make it a matter for national rejoicing.

When we commemorate a great writer, it is usually one who, like Shakespeare in England or Robert Burns and Walter Scott in Scotland, has by his development of our language or his retailing of our history done something to forge a distinctively national culture. When we revere soldiers or sailors, Wellingtons or Nelsons (to choose no more recent and controversial figures), we do so not just because they were good at their jobs but because their victories were instrumental in preserving and enhancing the national community to which we belong.

So it is with statesmen. However much we admire their skills, whatever they may have done for our national efficiency and well-being, they are accorded the highest honours only if they have contributed in some spectacular way to the building and preservation of the nation as a whole. Sometimes we can identify a personality to whose courage and skill the nation owes its very existence: a George Washington, a Simon Bolivar, a Cavour, a Bismarck, a Gandhi, even in his way a Lenin. Older, more complex societies may excavate quasi-mythical figures—Hereward the Wake or Joan of Arc. And sometimes these older societies, conscious of early greatness and later decay or disintegration, can throw up a figure who somehow pulls them together, reminds them of past achievements, guides them through present dangers and sets them on their way with new confidence and resolve. One such was Abraham Lincoln; another was Charles de Gaulle; but preeminent among them was Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill.

It is the business of serious historians, not to create comfortable myths but to destroy them; to remind us that the past was not golden; that our ancestors were not geniuses; that previous eras tolerated a degree of inequity, misery, and suffering that we would find intolerable in our own societies and

are shocked to discover in others; that previous generations blundered their way through problems as blindly as we do today; that historical idols had feet, not perhaps of clay but certainly of flesh and blood. The achievements of Bismarck and Stalin remain a matter of record; but each new generation of historians uncovers horrifying new details of their pettiness or cruelty or vindictiveness. At the other extreme, the wisdom and good humour of a Lincoln or a Gandhi are so self-evident that we are often shocked to find that they were highly skilled political operators as well. We can admire all that de Gaulle did for his country without finding it in the least necessary to like him.

As for Churchill, he is near enough to us for his faults to be fresh in our minds. He was far too much of a romantic to be a successful politician or indeed a successful strategist. Deprived of power he could be outrageously irresponsible; equipped with it, a merciless bully. In peacetime politics he was not so much out of his depth as floundering in shallows like a stranded whale. In war and the whole business of war he found an uninhibited satisfaction which the High Victorians might have understood (Tennyson and Ruskin would certainly have appreciated it) but which to our own battle-scarred generation seems rather shocking. Robert Rhodes James was quite right in suggesting that, had he died in the 1930s, Churchill would have left a reputation much like that of his father, as a brilliant failure. But Churchill did not die in the 1930s. He lived to reunite a shaken and divided nation, rally it after catastrophic defeat, sustain it through ordeals unparalleled in its history and lead it to a victory which seemed to assure its survival as a great world power. That this victory did nothing of the sort; that the world had changed too drastically for Britain to continue to play the role in it which Churchill and his generation had always taken for granted: this was no fault of his.

IT IS PROBABLY as a great war leader that Churchill would wish to be remembered, and it is right that he should be. Ultimately it was he who bore the responsibility for Britain's conduct of the Second World War, for reconciling the differing views and interests of the various Services, commands and theatres, and harmonising them with those of our allies. It was he, also, who had to provide a constant fount of encouragement and inspiration to subordinates who, under-

standably enough under the circumstances, were liable to lapse into inertia and defeatism. All this was more important than his own ideas about strategy, some of which were somewhat bizarre. But more important even than Churchill's conduct of the War was his leadership at home. No amount of strategic skill or managerial competence would have availed if he had not presided over a people who were, almost literally, prepared to bear any burden and make any sacrifice for victory, and to do so without any serious measure of compulsion.

It is doubtful whether any other statesman of the time could have provided the quality of leadership which made it possible for the British people to make those sacrifices; and evoked from them efforts of which they had never believed themselves capable. There was, it was true, a grumbling group of Adullamites in the House of Commons who twice forced a vote of no confidence—on both occasions with derisory results. There were fringe parties of the discontented who contested by-elections and indeed won one or two. But these divisions were negligible compared with those of the First World War, during the first half of which the Conservative Party continued, with massive press support, their rancorous attacks on the Liberal administration of Herbert Asquith, and during the second half Lloyd George had to contend against an unholy alliance of Asquithian Liberals, Conservative back-benchers, discontented generals, and the Northcliffe Press.

CHURCHILL WAS ABLE TO UNITE the nation, as Lloyd George could not, partly through a personal charisma which he could, unlike Lloyd George a generation earlier, exercise through the media of broadcasting and film. He did so also because he kept together one of the most successful political coalitions in our entire political history. The Conservative Party did not love him: he was after all a political maverick with an appalling record of tergiversation and misjudgment. But they did not have for him that sustained hatred which so many of them had felt for Lloyd George—the enemy and would-be destroyer of their class—throughout the First World War. Many in the Labour ranks *did* see Churchill as the class enemy; the name “Tonyandy” still awoke a Pavlovian reaction, especially among those who had no idea what had happened there, or even where it was. But his very distance from the Conservatives, that Palmerstonian touch of Whig raffishness which set him apart from the sober city bankers and the sombre manufacturers from the Midlands, made Churchill the more acceptable to the Labour leaders; and this was one of those very rare occasions in the Party's history when the Labour leaders were more or less in agreement with one another, and the Labour Party was more or less willing to be led.

Certainly no pukka Conservative would ever have entrusted the lion's share of domestic administration, as did Churchill, to his Labour colleagues and left them to create what was effectively a socialist siege economy while he himself got on with fighting the War. Churchill knew that the Labour leadership could communicate with the urban

working-class population in a way that the Conservatives could not. The ponderous and to much of the population largely unintelligible exhortation “YOUR COURAGE, YOUR CHEERFULNESS, YOUR RESOLUTION WILL BRING US VICTORY” came down off the billboards, to be replaced by Herbert Morrison's perky “Go to it!” (though there were those sardonic spirits who replied to Mr Morrison, “Come off it!”). The incomparable Ernest Bevin moved in to handle labour problems. Brilliant entrepreneurs like Lord Woolton handled food distribution. That classless enigma Brendan Bracken brought zest and imagination to the underrated but vital job of Minister of Information, making communications snappy, informative, and often fun. There developed throughout the land a sense that at the top of the vast grey bureaucracy which issued ration cards, petrol coupons, work permits, and import quotas there were people who understood the problems of ordinary men and women and were working to ease them. So people by and large put up with dangers and inconveniences and got on with the War. At the same time they formed an overwhelming determination not to go back again to the old ways: a determination which they registered in the election of 1945.

IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE to paint too golden a picture of this wartime camaraderie. There were labour disputes, strikes and, especially in the grey middle years of the War, grumbling tensions and discontents. Nor was the successful forging of national consensus wholly due to the leadership of Churchill and his colleagues. Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union silenced those left-wing elements which, though numerically inconsiderable, were the more dangerous for their readiness, then as now, to exploit social difficulties and tensions in the interests of revolutionary objectives; not only silenced them but brought them into willing if strictly temporary alliance with “the capitalist enemy” and the moderate Labour leaders whom they disliked even more. Circumstances created a genuine national unity which excluded only a tiny fringe of Fascist psychopaths. As a result some former Communists quietly shed their old allegiances and allowed themselves to be permanently absorbed into the general democratic process. Others did not, and returned to their old allegiances as soon as the War was over. The experts in MI5 are probably still trying to work out which did which.

BEHIND ALL THIS, however, there were longer-term trends at work: trends which historians are still trying to discover and evaluate. Great Britain, on the whole, was during the first half of the 20th century a far more orderly society than it had ever been in the past. The first half of the 19th century had seen social disorders throughout the land which had sometimes approached the intensity of civil war. The second half had seen the development of enormous cities, in certain districts of which the writ of law did not run—appalling areas of crime and deprivation and squalor from which respectable Victorian society tried to avert its eyes. In the first decade of this century, labour disputes in the mines,

on the docks and on the railways reached an intensity culminating in violent and sometimes lethal confrontations. Compared with some of those, the clashes between pickets and police today would look like a friendly football match.

Nevertheless, it was during that decade that the Liberal Administration in which Winston Churchill started his ministerial career laid the foundations, with its social insurance and pensions schemes, for what was later to be termed "the Welfare State": a community in which the well-being of the entire population was recognised as being the proper concern of the Government. Until then, it is doubtful how far one can speak of Britain as being a "community" at all, rather than an infinity of dissimilar communities, staggeringly different in their standards of living and often barely able to communicate with one another.

How fast and how far this process would have gone but for the outbreak of the First World War—whether rising expectations would have led to impatience and disruption, to backlash and confrontation as they so often do—it is impossible to say. At all events, that war gave a powerful impetus to this process of community-building. As Lord Beloff has reminded us in the title of his latest book, Wars and Welfare have paradoxically gone hand in hand. It was the revelation of the sickly condition of young men called up to serve in the militia in the Crimean and Boer Wars that provided the impetus for the first surveys and provisions for national health services; and, it was the expectation of war before 1914 that made national "fitness" a serious political issue.

The War itself, when it came, speeded the development of national community in two fundamental ways. First, in a conflict whose conduct was so fundamentally dependent on industrial productivity, the labour force had to be conciliated not only with higher wages, but by having their leaders brought into the process of government. "Labour" could no longer be treated as a commodity: it had to be seen as *people*, whose well-being demanded careful attention and who collectively could exercise considerable political power. The extension of the franchise in 1918, perhaps the most important domestic consequence of the First World War, brought the whole of the "working classes", as it brought the great majority of women, within the pale of the political community for the first time.

Secondly, the experience of virtually universal military service forged, as it always had in continental conscript forces, a sense of national identity and cohesion far deeper than any political or social programmes could possibly have achieved. Common experiences, broadly shared across barriers of locality and class; common ordeals endured; common memories to be recollected—these were to provide a deep binding force, as effective on the miners of South Wales and Durham as on the countrymen of Wessex or the city-dwellers of Liverpool and London. Service with the armed forces in the First World War, as in the Second, did not "militarise" people, in the sense that it made them amenable to discipline and indifferent to slaughter. But it did "socialise" them by introducing them to wider communities and giving them broader loyalties than they had known in civil life.

It was not least effective in confronting young men of the wealthier classes with some of the appalling inequities of

their own societies and making them resolve—Major Attlee, Captain Eden, Captain Harold Macmillan, to name only three—to do something about it. And it may have provided a ballast in keeping the country steady during those disturbed post-War years, when the wave of revolution sweeping across Europe lapped the shores of our islands, especially those of the Firth of Clyde; when attempts to restore economic "normalcy" seemed to threaten everything that the working men had gained during the War; and when firebrands like the young Emanuel Shinwell had to be imprisoned as dangerous menaces to public order.

Television cameras, had they existed, would have recorded scenes on Clydeside and in South Wales in 1919 and 1926 as disturbing as those of 1911, and at least as violent as those of 1984. We must remember today that the miners are reliving the very different battles fought for very different purposes by their fathers and grandfathers before them. And after the General Strike of 1926 (as tragically abortive and unpopular as the miners' strike today) there came, for many workers, the cold misery of the slump. Nevertheless social cohesion held. The frontiers of the welfare state were extended by Stanley Baldwin's Minister for Health, Neville Chamberlain, who, had he died in 1931, might have been remembered as one of the great reforming Ministers of the 20th century. The returning prosperity of the 1930s gradually shrivelled up the worst pockets of misery and improved the living standards of the great bulk of the population. In 1939 the country went into the War once again virtually united.

SO CHURCHILL DID NOT HAVE TO conjure national unity out of thin air. He had only to sense and evoke it, to find the tone, the style of leadership to which it would respond.

And again, war and welfare went hand in hand. Labour leaders, co-opted to a far greater share of power than their predecessors had enjoyed in the First World War, were determined to use it so as to remove for ever the inequities of the old order, and they found willing hands to help them in a Civil Service educated, over the past thirty years, to a new sense of social responsibility. The fair shares ensured by war-time rationing; the concern for child-welfare and provision for old age; the war-induced sense of belonging to a close and beleaguered community in which no one should prosper at the expense of anyone else; all this became enshrined in war-time legislation carried by universal consent, and was extended by the subsequent Labour Government, many of whose measures (with the obvious exception of nationalisation) enjoyed a broad measure of cross-bench support. With Labour administrations dominated by Attlee and Bevin and Gaitskell and their like; with Conservative administrations dominated by Eden and Butler and Macmillan and *their* like; with Tony Crosland and Roy Jenkins rising fast in the one party and Edward Heath and Edward Boyle in the other, Britain seemed at last to have reached the broad sunlit uplands of which Churchill once spoke. When Churchill himself retired in April 1955, he could look back on fifty years of

ever-increasing national consensus in the creation of which he had himself, whether through wars or through welfare, played a highly creditable part.

That is the point at which we would all like to end the story, with the time-honoured sentence "And they all lived happily ever after." Alas: only fairy tales end with that sentence, whether they are fairy tales told by Hans Christian Andersen or by Karl Marx. In real life the story goes on, providing new tragedies and new challenges. Perhaps it is a blessing for mankind that it should be so, so that there is no temptation for us to fall back into comfortable inertia. If so, it is (as Churchill himself once remarked) a blessing very effectively disguised.

THE FIRST AND MOST OBVIOUS POINT to be made about the course of events since 1945 is that the degree of national unity which we achieved under the leadership of Winston Churchill has since been steadily eroded; that that glorious flood-tide which swept us all up together in a single national effort has ebbed, leaving a desolate foreshore littered with evil-smelling detritus and decay. The reasons for this have been so frequently and exhaustively analysed, perhaps most effectively by the Earl of Stockton (Harold Macmillan) in the House of Lords a month or so ago, that I need only sketch them in barest outline.

The underlying cause has probably been the fact, so evident to us now but then concealed from all but a very few farsighted prophets, that the era of national unity was also that of national economic decline. Why this should have been so, and what connection, if any, can be traced between the two phenomena, it would take too long to discuss, and I do not feel myself well-equipped to do so. But the consequence has been that, although the shares of national wealth may have been more equitably distributed, they have been shares of a shrinking cake. At first our economic problems could be attributed to wartime strains and dislocations; only a few prescient analysts realised that they ran far deeper. Only gradually was it appreciated that our problems were far more profound, rooted in our history, our social structure, in our very early success; and that their resolution might have to involve precisely those traumatic shocks which we had all prided ourselves on having, unlike less fortunate nations, so successfully avoided. I leave it to economists to dispute how far, if at all, the burdens of the Welfare State contributed to the decline of our economy. I can only say that they could not have made our recovery any easier.

Then there came "the oil shock" of the early 1970s, that sudden, sharp increase in the price of the staple fuel of the industrialised world which shook even the strongest economies and nearly destroyed the weaker ones. How we would have fared if we had not simultaneously become an oil-producing country ourselves, I do not dare to speculate; but for us the effect has been at least cushioned. None the less the era of cheap fuel has gone for ever, at least until the scientists provide us with a source of nuclear or solar energy which is not only plentiful and cheap but quite evidently safe.

The second factor, and one seldom cited in this connection, has been the sexual revolution: the dissemination of cheap

and reliable means of birth-control which make sexual intercourse simply a finite and highly enjoyable act without any necessary further consequences. The effect of this on the status of women and on the traditionally central role of the family is self-evident. Less evident, however, is the part this has played, for better or worse, in encouraging a new generation to reject in their entirety the social *mores* of their parents; or at least to select from among them those which they find personally convenient. It is arguable that this is only extending to the entire population the freedom which has been available to the "enlightened" upper classes since the days of H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw, but the implications for social stability are none the less profound. Societies everywhere have always been held together by a shared continuity of *mores*, with sexual *mores* at the very core. The new freedom certainly liberates the individual, but it imposes on him crushing responsibilities whose full implications may not be appreciated until it is too late. The inability of so many people, deprived of traditional guidelines, to cope with these responsibilities has created huge social problems. As for the effect on the cohesiveness of society, on that web of mutual obligations and duties and responsibility which enables it to function at all, one can only say that it is far too early to assess it. What we are witnessing is perhaps the greatest social revolution in the history of mankind.

BUT OF OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE is of course what has been appropriately termed "the third industrial revolution": the first being that in which Britain led the way with coal and iron; the second, pioneered by Germany and the United States, with electricity and petro-chemicals; the present one, led by Japan, in computers, microtechnology, and robotics. As anyone knows who has had to grapple with the introduction of computers into office management or university libraries, the transformation in our lives is likely in the long run to be as complete as that effected by the transition from the horse and carriage to the automobile. And the social and economic costs are likely to be yet greater. With the whole mode of production being transformed, we are seeing social dislocation, if not suffering, on a scale comparable to that of the early industrial revolution. Communities and social groups whose livelihood depends on obsolescent processes face the prospect of social extinction. It is not simply the levels of unemployment resulting from this dislocation which are so disturbing; it is the grim long-term outlook of the labour forces discarded by old labour-intensive industries, with little prospect of being absorbed into the new capital-intensive ones.

Such a situation is bound to produce gigantic social strains. It throws on to the structure of the welfare state a burden such as its architects never conceived it would have to bear; and a generation brought up, rightly or wrongly, to regard the provision made for them by the state as a natural right understandably resent any curtailment of the benefits they receive from it, whether those benefits lie in the area of health, education, amenities, housing, or social security. Unions originally formed to protect their members from exploitation at

their work, to fight for better conditions and a living wage in an economic climate devoted to the maximisation of profits, now fight to protect the job itself, whether there is an economic need for it or not.

Workers have always seen their jobs less as a way of contributing to national wealth than as a means of drawing on it, a kind of social security; that goes for university teachers as well as miners. Nevertheless, unless people are able to contribute by their work to the functioning of society, thereby acquiring some status within it, they will feel rejected and ultimately alienated. It is bad enough to feel exploited; it is infinitely worse to feel ignored and forgotten. The long-term threat to social stability today arises less from those who feel themselves unjustly treated than from those, especially the young, who simply do not feel part of society at all and so defiantly turn their backs on it. It is among such people that chiliastic and unreasoning mass movements, led by messianic visionaries and dedicated to the destruction of the existing order, have, historically, always found their strongest support.

DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS THESE can impose intolerable strains on the strongest of communities. We must not underestimate the success with which our own society has so far contained them, the extent to which patience, tolerance, goodwill and mutual understanding have eased necessary transitions and defused unnecessary crises. I believe that this success owes a great deal to the habits of mind and sense of community established during that "era of national unity" to which I referred earlier. But neither should we ignore the existence of a dedicated minority which does not wish to see those strains contained; whose object indeed is to exacerbate them to the point at which the entire social order disintegrates and a new revolutionary élite can seize power and implement their own ideological objectives.

Their strategy was originally conceived by Lenin; the tactics have been conveniently described for us by such theorists and practitioners as Che Guevara, Marighella and Régis Debray. Legitimate grievances, especially those not easily remediable, are seized upon and exploited. A confrontation is forced in which the authorities are deliberately provoked to retaliate with violence. That violence is then itself exploited, both to discredit the authorities and to justify further violence on the part of the insurgents. "Red Guards" are formed, to intimidate potential or actual dissidents and ultimately to displace the incumbent authorities as the effective instruments of government. The mass of the population, wearied and sickened by endemic violence, ultimately accepts the revolution as the only way of restoring some kind of stability and order.

This theory of revolution has been spelled out, as I have said, by the theorists of the Left, whose works were such fashionable reading in the late 1960s among students who have now reached positions in society where they may feel able to start putting them into effect. But the practitioners who used these tactics most successfully even before they were formulated were the revolutionaries not of the Left but

of the Right—first Mussolini, then Hitler: models whom Left-wing theorists prefer to ignore, but whose methods, in rising to power, gave rise to scenes very similar to those we have been witnessing in this country over the past year of the miners' strike. But whether it comes from revolutionaries of the Left or Right, the threat to our society remains the same. It must be identified, it must be resisted, and it must be denounced. Those who out of compassion with the grievances which are being so skilfully exploited fail to do so, however great their political or ecclesiastical eminence, are at best naive, and at worst willing dupes.

THE TACTICS OF DEALING WITH such revolutionary manoeuvres demand courage, intelligence, patience, and above all invincible good humour: the characteristics which have so far been shown, in face of all provocation, by the police.

The strategy must, of course, be to remove the sources of grievance, which is a great deal more easily said than done. Ultimately it can be achieved only by the creation of national wealth, both for investment to create further employment, and for public expenditure on the level needed to sustain the welfare state. That wealth, as we all now know quite literally to our cost, cannot be created by printing money. High-minded adjurations as to how wealth should be redistributed are of very little help if the wealth is not there to redistribute. As to how that wealth is best created we look to the economists for guidance; but it has always seemed to me to have been a sad day when the subject ceased to be called "political economy" and became simply "economics." Classicists will remind us that the term in Greek does mean "the management of a household", but it is too easy to forget that economics is a branch of politics rather than of mathematics, and that households consist of people rather than of account books.

There is probably no way in which the transition through which we are passing can be managed without hardship, and if these are really the only alternatives it may be that some short-term, local hardship, if properly alleviated, may in the long run be better than widespread and growing pauperisation. But the greater that hardship, the greater the need for evident and genuine public concern, for a sense of compassion to be radiated from the top, perhaps for some sumptuary taxation to be levied on conspicuously-displayed wealth, above all the need for encouragement, to see light at the end of the dark tunnel.

The criticism does seem to me to be well-founded, that key members of the present Government appear to see their function to be that of managing an economy, or indeed running a business, rather than that of caring for a community. Indeed (speaking as a drop-out from a long line of businessmen) I don't see how you *can* effectively run a business unless you are seen by the work-force as caring for their welfare. In political as in military leadership, the way in which things are done is no less important than what is done. The tougher the going, the greater the hardships demanded, then the greater the need for unflinching resolution at the top; but the greater the need for evident compassion as well.

THIS BRINGS ME BACK to the concept of the nation as a focus of communal loyalty. Nostalgia is the worst imaginable guide in politics, and there was much in old-fashioned patriotism of which we should be glad to see the end. Too often national unity has been purchased at the price of international disunity, and we must not forget that the era of national unity which I have described was the era of the most terrible wars in the history of mankind; in whose creation and continuation, fanatical dedication to a national ideal played a dominant and sinister role.

Patriotism is the close ally of xenophobia, if not of racial arrogance. But a proper pride in the community to which one belongs, an awareness of how it has developed in the past and the problems which it has confronted and overcome, an understanding of the tasks which confront it today and the opportunities which await it in the future, above all a shared appreciation of the values for which it stands or should stand in the international community—all this seems to me an essential framework to enable our society to function at all. I entirely endorse the views of the Secretary of State for Education and Science, Sir Keith Joseph, that children in schools should be made aware of this framework, whether they are native-born in this country or come from families which have decided of their own free will to settle here from overseas. This seems to me to be a question not of party politics but of simple common sense, if not of social survival.

For national feeling is like the devil in the gospel in whose place, once it was cast out, seven devils entered in. Loyalty, or what sociologists call “group cohesion”, is a fundamental instinct in mankind, and national loyalty only gradually developed out of a mass of small, conflicting, more immediate loyalties. The abandonment of the nation as a focus for loyalty means that loyalties focus not at a higher level, but at a lower; upon class, or regions, or sects (or indeed sex), or on race, or simply upon gangs—groups in continual and often murderous conflict with one another. National feeling is what makes community-building possible: the sense that, in a fundamental way, we belong to one another.

CLEARLY IT IS DESIRABLE, so far as possible, to continue this move from lower to higher loyalties, from Britain to Europe or to Commonwealth or the Atlantic Community; ultimately to the Planet Earth. But this can be done effectively only if the roots of national loyalties are well-nourished, and this higher loyalty carries the whole nation with it: not just the highly-educated few. Otherwise national unity can be disrupted and nothing gained in its place.

It is all too possible, in seeking unity with other peoples, to lose touch with one's own. There is much satisfaction to be gained by feeling oneself “a good European” or “a good Atlanticist”; as much at home in Brussels or Paris, or Washington or New York, as one is in London; but it is not so good if one is not equally at home in Scunthorpe or the Rhondda Valley and is in consequence perceived in those areas as a member of an alien international élite, which neither understands their problems nor shares their loyalties. It is all very well creating a great international trading community, turning one's back on protection and currency restrictions—but not

so good if as a result British industry is starved of investment, and funds are channelled instead into more lucrative enterprises overseas. It is all very well improving productivity and profitability by international mergers—but not so good if as a result the fate of entire British communities is determined in Essen or Tokyo or Detroit.

MY POINT IS THIS. Internationalism, or rather supranationalism, is all very well if it is based on strong, coherent, national entities. But the greater the opportunities it seems to offer, the greater is the need to promote *national* consensus. Otherwise the élites who participate in these supranational enterprises, be they politicians, industrialists, financiers or intellectuals, will be seen as out of touch with and irrelevant to the needs of the ordinary people at the grass roots; people who may eventually turn to other leaders rather nearer home, more closely in touch with their concerns, speaking with accents they find more familiar: leaders who will seem to stand very much more unequivocally for what *they* perceive as being the national interest.

I have mentioned the rise of Fascism and the lessons we should learn from it. Don't let us forget the extent to which European Fascism was legitimised by a nationalistic backlash against internationalism; especially against an international capitalist system whose apparently arbitrary operations enriched the few—a few who spent their wealth in insolently conspicuous display—but created enormous pockets of misery about which democratically elected leaders apparently could, or would, do nothing.

The concept of national unity took centuries to develop. The danger today is not so much that it will fail to develop yet further to embrace higher loyalties, as Lionel Curtis and Alfred Milner hoped that it might with the Commonwealth, or as Jean Monnet hoped that it might with Europe; but rather, that it will gradually disintegrate, leaving a country divided, impoverished, and virtually ungovernable; a country at the mercy of fanatics and ideologues, who are quite prepared to use violence to achieve their ends. National unity cannot be preserved by governmental action alone. There must be a realisation on the part of us all that Britain is itself a Commonwealth: a society in which the enrichment of the few contributes little if anything to the national well-being but the deprivation of a substantial minority impoverishes us all.

SHOULD WE WISH THAT WINSTON CHURCHILL was alive to lead us today? Frankly, I don't think so. After all, the Churchill of 1940 was also the Churchill of 1911 and indeed of 1926. He was a warrior whose joy in battle often overrode any desire for conciliation and who itched for the opportunity, as he once phrased it, “to put these grave matters to the proof.” I suspect the recent crisis would have found him in the police control-rooms, devising new strategies, new tactics, and even new weapons to thwart the pickets, in the intervals of making speeches which delighted a part of the population as much as they infuriated the rest. The genius required to lead a united

people is not necessarily that best attuned to nursing a community through a period of deep internal division and social stress.

But from that protean character we can none the less learn lessons of abiding relevance for all of us. It was Churchill's firm vision of a united nation transcending all barriers of party, region, and class—a vision rooted in his understanding, as a historian, of how that unity came to be created, and his confidence as a statesman that, in spite of all dangers

threatening from outside and within, it could yet be enhanced and preserved—that made him so universally acceptable as a national leader. The problems which confront us today are far more complex and the dangers are no less great than those which we faced forty years ago. They demand a different style of leadership and a rather different blend of resolution, compassion, and sheer political skill. But without that vision of transcendent national unity, the British people, as a people, will quite assuredly perish.

AUTHORS

Iain Crichton Smith, born in 1928 on the island of Lewis in the Hebrides, writes in both Gaelic and English. His most recent prose work is *Mr Till and Other Stories* (Gollancz, 1984); *The Exiles*, published by Carcanet Press in 1984, was a Poetry Book Society Choice.

Michael Howard, Regius Professor of Modern History, University of Oxford, is the author, among other works, of *The Causes of War* (Temple Smith, 1982; Unwin paperbacks, 1984), *The Franco-Prussian War* (n.e. Methuen, 1981), *War in European History* (Oxford University Press, 1976), and *The Theory and Practice of War* (1965). His article in this issue is a version of his speech to the English Speaking Union at the Guildhall in London. Previous articles include "The Concept of Peace" (December 1983), "The World of Henry Kissinger" (November 1982), and "The Causes of War" (March 1982).

Anthony Glees is a lecturer in the Department of Government, Brunel University, and the author of *Exile Politics During the Second World War* (Oxford University Press, 1982). He is currently preparing books on the politics of the western part of Germany since 1945, and on the problem of Communist subversion and British counter-intelligence 1939-51, to be published respectively by Oxford University Press and Jonathan Cape.

John Gohorry's first collection of poems, many of which first appeared in ENCOUNTER, has just been published by Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets under the title *A Voyage Round the Moon*.

Peter Porter's latest book of poems, *Fast Forward*, was published last year by Oxford University Press, who in 1983 brought out his *Collected Poems*.

Max Beloff was until his recent retirement Principal of the University College at Buckingham; he was created a life peer in 1981. His most recent book, *Wars and Welfare: Britain 1914-1945*, is published by Edward Arnold.

Brian Crozier is the founder and first director (1970-79) of the Institute for the Study of Conflict in London. He is the author of biographies of Franco, de Gaulle, and Chiang Kai-shek, and co-author of *This War Called Peace* (Sherwood Press, 1984).

François Bondy is an editor of the monthly *Schweizer Monatshefte* and of *Die Weltwoche* (Zurich). His latest book, *Der Nachkrieg muss kein Vorkrieg sein: Europäische Orientierungen* (Benziger Verlag, Cologne), is an analysis of recent European intellectual trends.

François Fejtő, Paris correspondent for *Il Giornale Nuovo*, is the

author of *The French Communist Party* (M.I.T. Press, 1967) and *History of the People's Democracies* (Penguin ed., 1974).

Samuel Brittan is Assistant Editor and principal economic commentator of the *Financial Times*. His books include *Capitalism and the Permissive Society* (Macmillan, 1973), *The Economic Consequences of Democracy* (Temple Smith, 1977), *How to End the Monetarist Controversy* (Institute of Economic Affairs, 1981), and *The Role and Limits of Government*, published last year by Temple Smith.

Anthony Hartley, for several years editor of *Interplay* in New York, is a political writer living in London. Among his books are *A State of England* (1963) and *Gaullism* (1973). His articles in ENCOUNTER include "Bishops, Politicians, & Spiritual Times" (March 1985) and "The Collapse of a Broad Church" (September-October 1983).

Kenneth Minogue, Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics, is the author of *The Liberal Mind* (1963), *Nationalism* (1967), and *The Concept of a University* (1973), and co-editor of *Contemporary British Philosophers* (Methuen, 1976). His latest book, *Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology*, was published this spring by Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Ian Davidson is European Editor of the *Financial Times* and the author of *Britain and the Making of Europe* (Macdonald, 1971).

David Spanier, formerly diplomatic correspondent of *The Times*, is now diplomatic correspondent of LBC, the London radio station. His books include *Europe, Our Europe, Total Poker*, and *Total Chess* (Secker & Warburg, 1972, 1977, 1984).

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph* in London. His book *The Senate of Lilliput*, published by Faber in 1983, is to be followed this year by a sequel, *Hummingbirds and Hyenas*.

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery is Conservative MP for Brighton Pavilion. He held various ministerial posts in the administrations of Harold Macmillan and Edward Heath. During World War II he parachuted into the Balkans on a special mission and fought with the Albanian guerrillas; he has recounted the full story in his book *Sons of the Eagle* (1948). He is also the author of three volumes on the life of Joseph Chamberlain, and of *Approach March* (1972), a volume of early memoirs.

Joseph Epstein's article, "Partisan Review & the Phillips Curve", (ENCOUNTER, January), originally appeared in *The Sewanee Review*.

Anthony Glees

Churchill's Last Gambit

*What the "Secret Documents" Reveal about
the Prime Minister's Adventurous Initiative in 1953
on the Reunification (and "Neutralisation"?) of Germany
... and why Dr Adenauer Prevailed*



GERMANY REUNIFIED is not something that most non-Germans seem over-keen to see. The reasons for this are almost too obvious to bear listing. Such a Germany would be too powerful to fit comfortably into the contemporary world; it would be too strong economically; and it would be able to exert far too much pressure on its neighbours. But then few people would

ever expect such a Germany to materialise. Its division is now widely regarded as historically immutable, securely grounded in the fact that, once the great armies of the anti-Hitler coalition occupied their respective zones in 1945, *die deutsche Frage*, "the German problem", was apparently solved for ever by the simple expedient of dividing it.

Yet if this is really so, it is legitimate to enquire why the creation of a single German nation is an aim to which West German leaders—all of them—have remained committed. The current Chancellor is no exception. When he visited Oxford University last spring Helmut Kohl stated that:

"The German people expect every responsible German politician to work persistently for a state of peace in which they can determine their own unity."

Although he was clear both about his priorities and the length of time it would take to realise them, the emotional intensity of his personal commitment to reunification was remarkable. And while the D-Day anniversary occupied us last June, Herr Alois Mertes, a West German Foreign Office Minister, reminded the West that it had never actually solved the German question:

"Our allies must never forget that the German people, where they have been able to vote freely, have resolved to pursue their rights to security and reunification in harmony with the values of the Western democracies."

This statement of dissatisfaction with the division of Germany serves as a good illustration of the complexity of the issues involved. First, the right of Germans to national self-determination; then Bonn's insistence that it speaks for all Germans on this matter; and, finally, its rather touching reliance on others to deliver the goods.

There are those who assert that such sentiments are "mere window-dressing", that the many attempts at reunification were no more than part of an elaborate and cynical conspiracy to conceal from the German people the hard truth that they surrendered their right to self-determination on 31 January 1933, the day that Adolf Hitler took power. But can it really be assumed that German reunification, *die deutsche Wiedervereinigung*, is something that is simply talked about by politicians who in reality know there is no alternative to the present division? What such assumptions ignore is that politics are about alternatives; and although politicians like to justify their policies by pleading that they were inevitable, access to the archives of governments provides countless examples of alternatives which were on offer but were discarded by past policy-makers. The German question is a case in point: it should never be forgotten that the "solution" of 1945 was merely provisional, and that the possibility of reunification continued to preoccupy statesmen throughout the 1950s.

Significant new light has recently been cast on the most important attempt at reunification, the Berlin conference of 25 January to 18 February 1954 whose failure has usually been considered a foregone conclusion. The frozen stalemate with which it ended has been commonly seen as inevitable; although it may have produced serious discussion of the issues surrounding reunification, it was never a serious bid for reunification. The most recent evidence (which has emerged under the Thirty Year Rule at the Public Record Office) is bound to revise a number of these previously accepted judgments on the policies and the politicians who determined the fate of this conference. For although its failure may indeed have been a foregone conclusion *after* the summer of 1953, it was by no means inevitable *before* that summer. Indeed, during the period of intense diplomatic activity from March-July 1953, which spawned the Berlin talks, German

reunification really did appear to be in the offing. As we shall see, much of the failure can be ascribed to conscious and deliberate choices made by some of the protagonists.

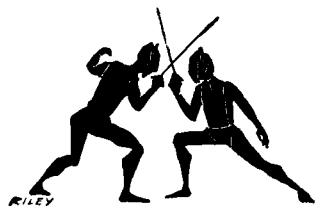
Most remarkable of all, however, is the conclusion that the positions actually adopted by the statesmen at the time were very different from those they claimed to have, and were accepted as having, both at the time and afterwards. The person who in 1953 most wanted to see a reunified Germany was not, as had been supposed, Dr Konrad Adenauer—it was Winston Churchill. And the person who ultimately won by exploiting his opponent's severe weakness and his "special relationship" with the United States was not Winston Churchill—but Konrad Adenauer.

It should be said that this interpretation does not convey any moral verdict. There were good arguments in favour of reunification—and good arguments against it. On the whole, Adenauer's position was less dangerous and more beneficial to the West than Churchill's. On the other hand, then as now, the reasons for supporting reunification were extremely important: a divided Germany represented a source of Great-Power conflict in the heart of Europe; it had brought the Iron Curtain so far west that the Red Army could reach the Rhine in a day. As Herr Kohl pointed out in May last year:

"a genuine and lasting peace in Europe will only be achieved when the German people are given the same opportunities as almost all the peoples of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the whole world, to determine the course of their own history."¹

It is not merely Herr Kohl's rhetoric that possesses a Churchillian ring. His arguments, too, reflect those of the British Prime Minister some thirty years before (rather than those of Adenauer, which they were intended to mirror), at a time when, owing to a chance constellation of events, Churchill found himself in a unique position for breaking out of the Cold War and its concomitant arms escalation. His end was "peace with Russia", his means was "German unity."

The Well-Known Story



THE MAJOR SOURCE OF our knowledge of the events of 1953 until now has been Konrad Adenauer's memoirs (published in 1966), which reinforced the view that the reunification of Germany had not been a practical possibility. Adenauer states that the choice facing Germany was either a West Germany which was politically free but integrated into the Western defence system (the European Defence Community—which failed—and then NATO), or a single German nation which was politically

neutral and thus likely to be dominated by the USSR.

Adenauer claims that this was a position adopted with equal conviction by his Western Allies. Unity could be achieved only if the USSR were to see West Germany so securely locked into the West that there was no longer any point in preventing its reunification.

Adenauer offers only the vaguest suggestion that in 1953 this common front was under strain; writing about Winston Churchill's Commons speech of 11 May 1953, he recalled his "surprise" at Churchill's plans. This surprise was soon to vanish. Following an official visit to London on 14-15 May 1953, Churchill's position was clarified for Adenauer and he became totally certain that Britain would never negotiate with the USSR on Germany's future over his head. Churchill had agreed with Bonn's position, that only a fundamental accord with the USSR could produce a single Germany even if there were minor disputes over tactics:

"The question of reunification cannot be considered a question in isolation . . . as much as I, as a German, wished to see reunification in peace and freedom . . . as a responsible politician I had to be clear that it was connected with a whole series of other issues."

Churchill, on the other hand, says Adenauer, was also "correct to say that one could not expect to solve all problems at once." Apart from this minor difference, then, it seemed that there was complete agreement between the Palais Schaumburg and 10 Downing Street.

Indeed, it seemed—until very recently—that in his memoirs Dr Adenauer had wildly exaggerated the implications of Churchill's speech of 11 May 1953. Its full text (*Hansard*, Vol. 515, p. 885 ff) demonstrated that Churchill had spoken only very generally, and that the future of Germany was but one aspect of many that were touched upon. After stressing that his advice had been ignored by the Americans in 1945 (when they insisted the Western armies draw back from their forward positions before a settlement with the USSR had been reached), he went on to state that due to Stalin's "very hostile line the immense and formidable problem of Germany" now presented itself in "an entirely different aspect." Britain, he went on:

"now has a new and remarkable relationship with Western Germany. The policy of HMG is to adhere most faithfully in the spirit as well as in the letter to our agreements with West Germany. Dr Adenauer may well be deemed the wisest German statesman since the days of Bismarck. I have greatly admired his perseverance, courage, composure and skill . . . strong as is our desire to see a friendly settlement with Soviet Russia—or even an improved *modus vivendi*, we are resolved not in any way to fail in the obligations to which we have committed ourselves about Western Germany. . . . It will in no way be sacrificed or—I pick these words with special care—cease to be master of its own fortunes within the agreements we have made with them. . . ."

However, Churchill continued,

"We have been encouraged by a series of amicable

¹ The latest opinion poll results (Institut für Demoskopie, Allensbach, June 1984) show 78% of West Germans in favour of reunification, 8% against, and 14% undecided. In the age range 16-19, 70% were in favour.

gestures on the part of the new Soviet government. . . . It would, I think, be a mistake to assume that nothing can be settled with Soviet Russia unless or until everything is settled. A settlement of two or three difficulties would be an important gain . . . piecemeal solutions should not be disdained. . . . I do not believe that the immense problem of reconciling the security of Western Europe [to this] is insoluble . . . the master-thought which animated Locarno might well play its part between Germany and Russia [today]. I believe that a conference on the highest level should take place without delay. But this would be the most fatal moment for the free nations to relax their comradeship. To fail to maintain our defence effort up to the limit of our strength would be to paralyse every beneficial tendency towards peace. . . ."

Apart from Churchill's reference to Locarno, his acceptance that the Russians had a right to security, and his recognition of friendly gestures from Moscow, it really is very difficult to understand why Adenauer's feathers had become so ruffled. Indeed, Churchill had paid him rather a handsome personal compliment by comparing him to Otto von Bismarck.

THIS, AT ANY RATE, was the view of two Labour MPs—Michael Foot and Barbara Castle—who spoke in the same debate. The former argued that Bismarck had been a menace and that it was, therefore, strange to use him as a comparison with Adenauer; Churchill was told to "brush up his history." Furthermore, the ideas of Dr Adenauer's political opponents, the *SPD*, should be taken into account. Finally, Michael Foot suggested, Churchill was merely paying lip-service to the idea of *détente*:

"Like Adenauer, he is saying that the whole plan for building Western defence should go ahead in precisely the same terms as had been laid down before we had any of these developments in the Soviet Union. Herr Ollenhauer [has taken a different line]. He said, 'a Four Power conference on Germany could not come a day too soon. . . . And no Government of Germany has the right to bind by treaty commitments a future all-German Government.'"

Mrs Castle amplified this point:

"The Prime Minister's most significant phrase 'that despite our desire for friendship with the Soviet Union we are resolved not to waive our commitment to Dr Adenauer' . . . is a formulation which makes the unification of Germany impossible. The *SPD* [furthermore] does not believe that if we had a unified Germany with free elections, the head of the Government would be Adenauer."

It might, therefore, seem that whatever Churchill had in mind, it was not something which permitted a belief that it would be either new or radical. Indeed, one could assert that Foot and Castle had got to the bottom of it because all that Churchill was really trying to do was tie West Germany even more firmly to the West by supporting Adenauer (rather than

the *SPD* who were clearly more neutralist), and was making friendly, if deceptive, noises towards Moscow solely to reassure the domestic critics of his policy.

In fact, as the secret documents reveal, the truth of 1953 was very different. Foot and Castle were quite wrong to assume that Churchill's olive-branch to the Kremlin's new leaders was "phoney", and Dr Adenauer was perfectly right to assume that Churchill's plans amounted to the most serious threat to the maintenance of the Federal Republic since 1949. The evidence shows that Churchill was indeed ready to sacrifice West Germany in return for peaceful coexistence with the East, and had Churchill not suffered a major stroke in June 1953 which prevented him continuing to direct British foreign policy, Dr Adenauer might have been forced to accept the prospect of an "Austrian solution", with all that that entailed. What the British public took to be British policy was, in consequence, not the policy being pursued by their Government.

Winston's First Move



CHURCHILL REASONED THAT the events of 1953 would give him a unique opportunity to forge a settlement with the USSR. There were new political leaders in the USA as well as in the Kremlin; France had a new Government; and the West German Republic was due to have a general election. If that election were to be fought against the background of "Reunification", it would be well-nigh impossible for Adenauer to block a British move towards it. Moreover,

Anthony Eden's severe illness had allowed Churchill to take direct control of the Foreign Office. It was the last time in his life he was to possess such power, and he was determined to use it. In addition, since the fledgling leaders—Eisenhower in Washington and Malenkov in Moscow—lacked his political experience, and Adenauer's hands seemed tied, Churchill believed that his deal with the Kremlin could come off; its fears about Germany could be assuaged with "a new Locarno", and the Iron Curtain be transplanted eastward.

At 07.54 on 4 March 1953, the first link in the chain was forged. The Foreign Office received a cable from its Moscow Embassy stating:

"Stalin is unconscious and his condition is very serious."

Subsequent cables enclosed precise details about the extent of his physical decline. (It was ironic that the Kremlin should be far more candid and specific about Stalin's illness in March than Whitehall was about Churchill's stroke in June.) It was plain that Stalin was dying and on 6 March 1953 Churchill became the sole survivor of the "Big Three." His first concern was to see who would emerge as new leader. A Foreign Office paper on 10 March (it was also shown to Mrs Churchill) assumed it would be Malenkov, although it

concluded that he might not remain leader for long. On 13 March they supplied Churchill with further intelligence:

"The apparent departure from attitudes which while Stalin was alive seemed immutable is astonishing enough. But even more remarkable is that the process of change should have been initiated before he was cold in his grave and by men who were apparently his devoted associates. . . . It is important to remember how personal was Stalin's contribution to the Revolution. Whatever Communism might have been, it was, so long as he lived, stamped with his stamp. He did this coldly and with calculation, by combining the methods of Ivan the Terrible with 1984. He destroyed the old Revolutionaries and replaced them by Soviet Man. . . ."

On 22 April the Foreign Office told Churchill that a "Committee of Five" now ruled the USSR, and had already made itself felt. It had stressed its friendliness towards the USSR's satellites, released the Kremlin doctors (on trial under Stalin), and issued a "condemnation of anti-Semitism and arbitrary police methods." Finally, there had been "noteworthy changes in public attacks on the USA and the West."

CHURCHILL, BY 12 APRIL 1953, had resolved to exploit what was obviously a major change in Soviet affairs. He wrote to the President of the United States:

"A new hope has been created in the unhappy, bewildered world. It ought to be possible to proclaim our unflinching determination to resist Communist tyranny and aggression and at the same time declare how glad we should be if there was a real change of heart."

Privately, however, Churchill was more than a little worried about Eisenhower's readiness to accept such messages. Churchill had been asked by the President through Sir John Colville (his Private Secretary) to avoid defending the wartime Yalta agreement with the USSR. Churchill believed that the Republicans were trying to argue that the USSR had not kept its side of the bargain whereas, in reality, they had.

"The facts of what happened at Yalta should be disclosed [he minuted to Colville]. The agreements were made between Stalin and President Roosevelt direct, and secret commitments were given to the Russians."

These had as their necessary result the spreading of Communist power in many areas—"Sakhalin, the Kuriles, Manchuria, the Polish Frontier, Königsberg and Germany. . . ."

At about this time, Churchill noted his thoughts on Foreign Policy recorded in a minute marked "TOP SECRET."

"At the end of World War Two, all men hoped for a just and lasting peace but the amassing of Soviet power has compelled the free nations to rearm . . . the result is that mankind seems to face alternatives of Atomic War at worst, and a life of perpetual fear and tension at best. Is

there no other way? With the death of Stalin, the new Soviet leadership has the opportunity to make its own future and to free itself from the past. This new Soviet leadership knows that western Europe can and will be made secure against attack. Will the Soviet leadership take advantage of this to help turn the tide of history? We are ready, to reduce the burden of armaments, to most solemnly agree to: (1) limit sizes of military and security forces of all nations and (2) have international control of atomic energy to ensure its use for peaceful purposes only and prohibition of weapons of mass destruction. . . .

If we fail to strive to seize this moment's precious chances, the judgement of future ages would be harsh and just. But if we strive and fail, it will be clear who has condemned humankind to this black fate."

On 15 April, Eden's bile-duct problem became so severe that he was forced to yield control of the Foreign Office to Churchill. The Prime Minister's personal power therefore became enormous—and he was clearly disposed to use it. On 21 April he sent Eisenhower a secret telegram which contained, in addition to a concrete proposal, an unveiled threat—

"In my opinion, the best would be that the three victorious powers who separated at Potsdam in 1945 should come together again . . . perhaps at Stockholm. If nothing can be arranged, I shall have to consider seriously a personal contact. . . ."

This was fighting talk. A "personal" approach by Churchill, direct to the Russians, was bound to have major international repercussions. In particular, it would suggest that a rift had developed in the Anglo-American relationship, and the Russians would have been bound to exploit this, not necessarily in ways beneficial to the West. There is no precise outline of what Churchill intended to say to the Russians at this juncture, although the documents make it clear that Germany was one of the most important subjects. But the telegram proves that Churchill was intent on a new line of approach.

Suspicious Grow



IT WAS AT ABOUT THIS TIME that Konrad Adenauer appears to have got wind of Churchill's intentions, and he was understandably greatly perturbed by them. He faced a crucial election where his foreign policy was bound to be one of the major issues. If the choice before the West German electorate were to be "national unity or Adenauer", he could not be certain of winning—and Churchill might well ensure that it was precisely this choice that materialised.

Adenauer's response was to fly to America in order to mobilise the support of the White House for his policy. Support was forthcoming and generous. He then made

certain that Downing Street knew that the US was behind him and approved his basic proposition—that the integration of West Germany into the Western Alliance system had to take precedence over reunification, even if it made reunification impossible. On Adenauer's return from America, Sir Frank Roberts prepared a full report for Churchill on 20 April 1953:

"Adenauer confirmed that his reception in America had been most encouraging both on the official and on the popular side. He asked me to let the Prime Minister know that it was his firm conviction that despite appearances, the new President knew what he was doing and had his ship well under control. He had, however, been shocked to find the strength of popular sentiment behind Senator McCarthy. The United States Commissioner Mr McCloy confirmed that Adenauer's visit had been a great success."

Adenauer's possibly insincere state of shock at the popular appeal of McCarthyism served as an implied warning to Churchill: any attempt by the British Prime Minister to "go it alone" would force Adenauer to play his anti-Communist card in America and possibly suggest that Churchill was being duped by the Kremlin.

TWO DAYS LATER, Dr Adenauer dispatched the German Counsellor at the West German Embassy in London, Dr Rosen, to see the Foreign Office in order to maintain the pressure. Churchill's reported view that "conversations at the highest level were now appropriate" had caused the West German Chancellor to

"wonder whether there was any modification of our previous attitude towards Russian peace feelers."

The Foreign Office gave a professional response, which was perhaps less reassuring than it was intended to be, although probably a fair statement of where British policy was at the time.

"There is certainly no change in our attitude. We continue firmly with our present policies looking carefully to see if Russian professions of peaceful intentions are matched by deeds."

The Foreign Office understood that the "chief German anxiety was lest we were contemplating Four Power talks on Germany over the heads of the German Government." Dr Rosen was informed that Sir Frank Roberts had already made it plain that "there was no question of our failing to keep the Chancellor informed if and when it were possible to reopen discussions on the future of Germany. . . ." In short,

² There were some signs that the Foreign Office, and particularly Frank Roberts, was personally committed to Dr Adenauer's standpoint—to an extent which suggests that even at this stage the Foreign Office was, for its own reasons, putting Adenauer's objections in the best possible light. Although the reasons for this were entirely respectable (for Churchill's plans were far-reaching and radical), the very great courtesy with which the Foreign Office treated Adenauer's case must have greatly encouraged him in his mission.

although nothing had happened so far, it might well happen soon, and Adenauer would be "informed" about what was happening although he would not be allowed to be a party to it.²

Adenauer was, however, not satisfied with what he learned. The British Prime Minister was not going to allow him to participate in his initiative, but the President might be more forthcoming. Once again, then, he turned to America for help, and once again it was forthcoming. On 25 April 1953 the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles (who was in Paris), told Churchill that Eisenhower:

"felt it unwise to embark on the work of disarmament until the Soviet Government had passed some test of sincerity."

He suggested an armistice in Korea and an agreement on Austria (both subsequently took place). Eisenhower sent an additional confirmation of his reluctance to go Churchill's way. On 27 April, marking it "TOP SECRET", Eisenhower wrote:

"I feel we should not rush things too much with the Soviets. Premature action by us in that direction might have the effect of giving them an easy way out. . . ."

In diplomatic language, Eisenhower was telling Churchill to stop making a fool of himself—which is how both West Germany and America viewed the prospect of early talks with the Soviet Union.

ADENAUER CONTINUED TO exert pressure on Churchill. On 1 May he sent Herbert Blankenhorn, one of his most intimate advisors, to see Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, the British High Commissioner in Germany. The ostensible reason for the visit was a matter of diplomatic nicety. Adenauer wished to have some British guidance about what to say about the Soviet Union during his official visit to Britain (planned for 14-15 May), and "recognised that it was more difficult to discuss this in London than in America. . . ."

This meant that Adenauer knew the British would not wish to hear the same intensity of anti-Communism that had gone down so well in the USA. But Blankenhorn also wanted to have confirmation that reunification would not be discussed without his knowledge, and that it would not form the object of any secret East-West deal. Kirkpatrick told him he believed that:

"The Prime Minister is resolved not to sell Germany. On the other hand, it was most important to avoid any language in England which could be regarded as provocative to the Russians or impeding the chances of any accommodation on outstanding issues. . . ."

Once again, the chances are that Adenauer was not greatly reassured. It was clear that something was afoot which would inevitably involve the future of Germany.

Dream or Delusion



THE INTENSE SPECULATION in Bonn was probably slightly lessened by the news that the British, French, and Americans had decided to precede a Four-Power conference by a Three-Power meeting scheduled to be held in Bermuda in July. But in order to have a further go at inhibiting Churchill,

Adenauer hit upon a new tactic. On 29 May 1953, the Bonn Government produced a memorandum on German reunification which contained clauses giving a unified German state the right to belong to NATO and rejected "the Oder-Neisse line" as the Eastern frontier for Germany. Both these items were obviously aimed against the Soviet Union which was bound to reject them; and Adenauer continued to press for the ratification of the European Defence Community and to contrast his plan for a westernised Federal Republic with the plans of unnamed others for a "neutralised and isolated Germany." "The German way", he wrote, must "lead to Europe, not to national isolation." On 10 June the *Bundestag* passed a resolution based on this memorandum, and Adenauer showed once again that his diplomatic skills were indeed of Bismarck's order.

Churchill appears to have been distinctly unimpressed by Adenauer's tactics. Adenauer had decided to dispatch Blankenhorn to Washington with a letter to Dulles, in which Adenauer insisted that the *Bundestag* Declaration should form the basis of talks with the Soviet Union whether Adenauer was to attend them or not. When Churchill received intelligence of Blankenhorn's mission he wrote a short but succinct minute:

"But we won the War, did we not? Unconditional surrender. . . ."

Although Churchill clearly believed Adenauer had a right to express his viewpoint, he did not believe the Allies were obliged to accept it. The West German Chancellor would have to do as he was told: the Germans had lost the War, and had surrendered unconditionally.

It was at this stage that Churchill appears to have produced the draft of his grand strategy for reaching an accommodation with the Soviet Union. It was based on the fundamental assumption that a new leadership in the Kremlin presented the West with an opportunity it could not afford to miss. If there was to be a lessening in tension, Germany and "the German question" constituted one of the most critical areas. So strong was Churchill's desire to have a new beginning in East-West relations that he was fully prepared, despite the reassuring noises emanating from the Foreign Office, to sacrifice a West Germany led by Dr Konrad Adenauer for a new, reunified Germany led by someone else.

There can be no doubt that Churchill's strategy for 1953-54 is surprising. Had he not described Adenauer as someone "who may be deemed the wisest German statesman since

Bismarck"? Or had he, by this careful formulation, avoided saying that he himself believed him to be so? In any case, by ditching Adenauer Britain and the West would be taking an enormous risk. A West Germany fully integrated into the Western Alliance system could be thought to serve British interests far more closely than a neutralised and reunified Germany. Secondly, on the face of it, it was impossible to conceive of any German political leader who had been more forthcoming in his dealings with the West. Although Erich Ollenhauer (then, as Dr Schumacher's successor, the *SPD* chief), and some of his advisors (notably his chief aide Fritz Heine) were totally committed to the West (in particular to Britain, for which they had worked during World War II while in exile in London), this was not true of many other leaders and members of the *SPD* which would almost certainly be the main beneficiary of Churchill's plan.

But in another sense, it should not be so surprising after all, Churchill had been the Conservative leader most closely associated with the moves to bring the Soviet Union into the Second World War in 1940 and 1941. It had been Churchill more than anyone else who accepted that only by allying itself with Stalin did the West stand any real chance of defeating Hitler; and, as the record shows, Churchill was ready to go to great lengths in order to cooperate with the Kremlin. Furthermore there were deemed to be practical reasons for believing that the scuttling of Adenauer's Bonn Republic would not, in fact, rebound in Moscow's favour, however much Adenauer protested that it would.

There will be those who may come to the conclusion that Churchill's aims were a further indication of his accelerating mental and physical decline, the unpredictable inspirations of an old man, a declining Prime Minister, a senile party leader. Lord Moran's diaries provide much evidence of Churchill's parlous condition in the early summer of 1953 which culminated in the massive stroke he suffered in the night of 23 June. Churchill was increasingly prone to depression, musing on "black velvet" (his private word for death) and the need for peace, and then bursting into tears. He was haunted by strange dreams—that a large woman had become President of the United States, that he had little boxes with bombs in them which he used to blow up the Bolshevik leaders. But, equally, such evidence should not be overrated. After all, Lord Moran mainly saw Churchill when he was unwell, and his stroke had not in fact killed him.

Changing Policies?

THE FULLEST STATEMENT of Churchill's aims at this time emerges from a long and thoughtful memorandum which he wrote on or before 6 July 1953, after he had suffered his stroke. This memorandum is not, in my own view, the mumblings of a senile world leader but a shrewd and realistic assessment of the alternatives facing British policy-makers confronted with the end of Stalin and his personal rule. Indeed, it would seem more legitimate to question Churchill's mental clarity at this time had he not produced such a memorandum. Above all, Churchill, unlike Adenauer or Eisenhower, seems to have understood that it

was at least arguable that by making early rearrangements with the new Kremlin leaders, they would be strengthening the hand of more moderate forces in the USSR: and that by rejecting all overtures they would only be giving support to the hard-liners.

Churchill did not believe that, in terms of security against further German aggression, there was much to choose between a Western Germany of 55 million inhabitants and a unified Germany of 70 millions. If the German issue could be defused, this would be most beneficial to East and West alike. Finally, and this is perhaps the crucial point, although it might not be Adenauer who led a reunified Germany, Churchill simply did not believe that it would be the Communists. His point of departure was the EDC and its likely failure (a correct prediction, as it turned out). Thus, whether anyone liked it or not, Germany's future place in world affairs would continue to be unsettled for the time being. Churchill was anxious to see a West German army play a key role in the defence of Europe. But this was not an end in itself. He hoped the French would ratify the EDC, but, if they refused:

"We should not hesitate to make a joint declaration with the United States that we would meet Russia in conference. If the US refuses, we should reserve our freedom. A friendly conversation between the USSR and Great Britain, even if isolated, would be watched with intense interest and hope, and might well lead to an easement in world tension. . . . Whatever happens about the EDC or NATO and however Adenauer fares at the elections, we shall have to face very soon the problem of German unity. Nothing will turn the German people from unity and Adenauer himself, though a loyal partisan of the EDC, is being forced every day to emphasise it more. However the election goes, all parties will be ardent for unity. This is surely coming upon us and coming all the quicker for a French desertion of EDC."

Churchill continued:

"We must face the fact that there will always be a 'German problem' and a 'Prussian Danger'. But I am of the opinion that a United Germany would not become allies of Soviet Russia. First, the character of the German people rises superior to the servile conditions of the Communist world. Second, they have had a potent object-lesson in the fate of the Eastern Zone. Third, the hatred which Hitler focussed upon Bolshevism is stony in German hearts. The eyes of Germany are turned against Soviet Russia in fear, hate and intellectual antagonism."

This judgment seems alert: the notion that a reunified Germany would drift into the Soviet sphere of influence was something Churchill could not believe. Provided the Russians really did extricate themselves from their Zone (admittedly rather a large provision, for it was by now a full-fledged East German "Democratic Republic"), the evidence certainly did suggest that the new German Reich would want to be an ally of the West.

But another matter had to be borne in mind, Churchill argued. If the West failed to act, the West German population might jettison its pro-Western sympathies, not least

because the USSR would be able to claim that it was not the West that had the true interests of Germany at heart.

"I am sure that in the next twenty years Germany will not join with Russia against the West or lose her moral association with the Free Powers. The Russians, however, have certain very powerful bribes to offer. First, the unity of the Eastern Zone after free elections [*sic*]. Second, a readjustment of frontiers at the expense of Poland. We shall need all our skill so to steer events that we may gain as much credit for any future advantage as do the Soviets. The Americans contemplate that in a war between the USA and the USSR, the Germans would make a firm and lasting alliance with the American people. What must not be forgotten by us is the safety of Russia against another Hitlerite invasion. The real solution, of course, is a real UNO where all are bound to aid the victim and attack the aggressive intruder. . . ."

Thus, for Churchill, German reunification was somehow on the political agenda whether or not anyone wished it. Even if Dr Adenauer did not aspire to unity, the German people did (his point about Adenauer "being forced" to emphasise reunification was well made). It could be offered by the West, or it could be offered by Russia; and if the Russians offered it first, the West would have no option but to follow. This is why Churchill argued that the initiative should be seized by the West.

SO ENTRENCHED was Churchill's view that the Foreign Office appears to have been embarrassed by it. Although further research would be needed to confirm this notion, there are a number of indications that it was anxious to quash the Prime Minister's plan. On 25 June 1953, Sir William Strang, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, attempted to produce what appears to be a reassuring *aide-mémoire* for his colleagues:

"The Prime Minister is in no hurry for a Four Power meeting. He has digested a paper about the neutralisation of Germany and though he is still toying with the idea as a possible alternative policy if the EDC is rejected, he is still open to argument. . . ."

"Political wisdom is not all on one side", he concluded, suggesting, perhaps, that he reckoned Churchill was barking up a gum-tree. Anthony Nutting, a junior Foreign Office Minister, seems to have been an ally of the Foreign Office in this matter. He pointed out that German reunification was not something the British should try to press:

"German reunification is very much an internal issue for the Germans. It is on the prospect of a Four Power meeting that the *SPD* will base its campaign accusing Adenauer of not doing enough to get Germany reunified and doing too much to get Germany into the EDC and thus dividing the country more than ever."

Somewhat despairingly, however, Nutting concluded that all

they could do was "make reassuring noises as loudly as possible to Dr Adenauer. . . ."

Frank Roberts, for one, took this advice. On 5 June, in London, he gave lunch to the German Ambassador, Baron von Herwarth, and Dr Rosen, and presented them with "reassuring messages for the Chancellor." He listened with apparent sympathy to the West German complaint that they were:

"not so much worried about our policy or Anglo-American unity but about the effects on the German internal situation. . . . For the next three months, foreign policy must give precedence to internal policy. . . . The Chancellor could only continue his foreign policy if he won the elections [and] it was quite vital to him to show he was being fully consulted on all German issues which might be discussed with the Russians. . . ."

It was Frank Roberts, too, who with his customary intellectual persistence tried to point out tactfully and firmly that Churchill's plans, if successful, would drive a coach-and-horses through existing arrangements:

"The policy of doing everything possible to help Adenauer win the elections is entirely inconsistent with any change-over to a policy of neutralisation as a result, say, of a Four Power meeting in the autumn. The first condition the Russians would make for an agreed German policy is the disappearance of Dr Adenauer and the European policies for which he stands. The German Socialists would be much more reliable and effective allies for a neutralisation policy although I have a feeling that if in power, they would pour a good deal of water in their wine. However, they are, perhaps, more pro-British than some of Dr Adenauer's allies and no one has ever suggested that we could not work with them. I am not, of course, advocating any such change in policy. As you know, I am firmly opposed to it. But it is surely only sensible at least to reflect at this stage upon what sort of Government we shall want in Germany if we have to carry out a different policy there. . . . I do not want the Foreign Office to be accused of lack of foresight if and when we are asked to turn over to a policy of neutralisation."

Sir William Strang wrote on the bottom of this paper: "We are still firmly for the EDC and Adenauer. . . ."

THIS IS NOT THE PLACE to ask whether the Foreign Office's attitude to German reunification was right or wrong, or, indeed, whether it was actually proper for it to "do everything possible to help Adenauer win the elections." If the SPD had got wind of this document, they would have been understandably less than pleased to learn that they were fighting some very formidable foes in London as well as in Bonn. A Socialist victory would have caused major changes in the development of the Federal Republic (particularly on the economic front) even if it had not produced a neutral and reunified Germany; and it was obviously something upon which Sir Frank Roberts, as a senior diplomat, was employed to have a view.

Dead End



CHURCHILL'S grand design came to nothing. There were a number of reasons for this. First, on 17 June 1953 (in the wake of the "panic and disarray" after Stalin's death) there was an uprising in East Germany and East Berlin, and the Soviet army put it down by force. This did much to destroy their political credibility as a reasonable negotiating

partner on the German question. Even here, however, there was an important discrepancy between the views of Churchill and the Foreign Office. When the FO issued a strong protest about the Soviet action, Churchill became furious.

"Is it [Churchill asked] suggested that the Soviet [*sic*] should have allowed the Eastern Zone to fall into anarchy and riot? I had the impression that they acted with considerable restraint in the face of mounting disorder."

The Red Army's action in the streets of East Berlin and Leipzig could be taken as confirmation of the Foreign Office view; as for Churchill's position, it could be argued that the uprising—*pace* "anarchy and riot"—was as much caused by Soviet zig-zag "liberalising" policies in East Germany as by quasi-Stalinist repression.

Secondly, Churchill's stroke forced him to surrender the personal rule which he had hitherto exercised on British policy; by the time he was sufficiently recovered Konrad Adenauer had been re-elected as *Bundeskanzler*, and changes in the Kremlin policy (and increases in its nuclear arsenal) made any fundamental change of direction by the West extremely hard to engineer. The "moment's precious chances" for a policy change had passed, and Churchill felt a keen sense of failure. On 7 December 1953, when the Bermuda meeting had finally taken place (it had been postponed on account of his stroke), Churchill complained to Eden that:

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

Leading academics

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Experienced honours graduates

TRANSLATORS

Qualified, most European languages

ARCHIVISTS

Editing and indexing by word processor

Research Assistance Routledge Associates

25 Woodhayes Road, London SW19

Phone 01-947 5614

"I can't find anything in this communiqué which shows the slightest desire for the success of the conference [on German reunification, to take place in early 1954] or for an easement in relations with Russia. We are going to gang up on them. . . . Many people would think we were deliberately riding for a fall. Perhaps we are."

Churchill's physician, Lord Moran, recalls in his memoirs a conversation during which Churchill told him of Eisenhower's declaration that "Russia was simply a whore who had changed her clothes but must still be driven from the streets" and said he had been powerless to oppose him. Churchill, Moran adds, "had been defeated by his own decay."

By 1954, as the newly available public records for that year reveal, even Churchill had come to accept the futility of pressing for a reunified Germany against the wishes of Washington and Bonn. To be sure, Dr Adenauer did not get everything his own way. At the beginning of 1954 he still tried to postpone the Four-Power meeting until after the ratification of the EDC by the French—which would, of course, have removed from the conference table the biggest incentive for the Russians to yield on the German question. But he knew that in this he would fail. As Frank Roberts was informed:

"Although the Chancellor has, in private, made no secret of his preference to avoid the Four Power Conference until after the EDC has been approved, the intense German interest in reunification should make it very difficult for him to appear to be obstructing a conference in any way. . . ."

Churchill did not abandon his dream of a major settlement with the USSR, but by early 1954 he realised that a reunified Germany would not constitute a part of it. Indeed, he went to some lengths to encourage Eden not to take the failure over Germany as a failure for the whole principle of an East-West understanding.

As far as German reunification was concerned, the failure of the 1954 Berlin Conference was a foregone conclusion. A reunified Germany and West German participation in the Western security system were held to be mutually incompatible alternatives and not part of the same process. The context in which any Soviet offer on Germany was to be taken was plain to the Foreign Office, as one of its minutes in January 1954 shows:

"... the Russians have built up a most effective security system of their own in Eastern Europe. Their basic objective now is the withdrawal of the USA from Europe."

Thus, in turn, the failure of the Berlin Conference gave a green light to German rearmament and to the bringing of Dr Adenauer's Bonn Republic into the Western Alliance. In June 1954 Eisenhower and Churchill met in Washington, and their final communiqué made this explicit:

"It was agreed that the German Federal Republic should take its place as an equal partner in the Community of

Western nations where it can make its proper contribution to the defence of the Free World."

Dr Adenauer was plainly delighted with this, and he cabled the two leaders on 29 June that their proposal

"completely coincides with the concept of the Federal Government. I particularly want to thank you . . . for your affirmation . . . of the Federal Republic's place in the community of the Western nations where it can make its contribution to the defence of the Free World. This statement is in accordance with the ardent desire of the great majority of the German people. . . ."

That final sentence would be difficult to substantiate if it implied that Adenauer was speaking for the East as well as the West Germans. But his elation was well-founded, for he had achieved his aim.

AND WHAT IF CHURCHILL'S INITIATIVE had come off? Would the creation of a neutral and reunified Germany have served the world's interests better than a divided German nation? There is always some justification for arguing "Better the devil one knows. . . ." A reunified Germany would have injected further political uncertainty into an already dangerously uncertain world. Had that Germany been attracted, as Churchill probably correctly predicted, towards the West, Soviet anxieties would certainly have increased (if those anxieties had not, in the first place, subverted any move to prise loose their "Eastern Zone"). Had it swung the other way—a new Germany, falling under Muscovite sway—British policy-makers would have been confronted with an Iron Curtain on the Rhine. Yet if Churchill was right to realise that the division of Germany was only a provisional answer to the historic "German question", had he not over-estimated Britain's ability to produce a more lasting settlement? If he was right to argue that the views of the German people had to be taken into account, had he not failed to perceive that those views might not necessarily take an anti-Adenauer line? It is ironic that if the West Germans of today ever take to looking for a champion of reunification, they cannot invoke the spirit of Dr Adenauer as the symbol of reunification. For him Westernisation (and its immediate military security), not "the Reich" (which could be Finlandised), was the main post-War German priority.

Konrad Adenauer emerges from the events of 1953 as the real victor. He was, in truth, a diplomat of Bismarckian proportions, though his solution to the German question was less grandiose than the Iron Chancellor's. Furthermore, his particular solution, despite its difficulties, produced advantages both for the uncertain Bonn Republic and for the troubled West. It was a creditable historical achievement. Churchill's last political gambit in the "Great Game" has been all but forgotten.

John Gohorry

The Truth About the Past

In the days that money was money and men were men
a pound was a week's wages, but then again
sixpence would pay for a night out on the town;
you could fly to New York for half a crown.
The most beautiful books imaginable cost a penny
and as for bus and train fares, there weren't any.
You could travel (on foot) free for five hundred miles;
to go further afield, people used bicycles.

My pocket money was a halfpenny a year
and, being extravagant, I spent somewhere near
a quarter of that on toys and expensive things
—the rest I put carefully into my bank savings.
I bought a Cadillac when I was twelve
for a shilling, and pedalled it myself
at a hundred and sixty through the garage doors
in a loud red blur and a haze of exhaust vapours.

There were no televisions then, and a radio
was something for attentive listening to;
the man read the news in a bowler hat,
a pressed white shirt, and a clean cravat
so his voice would be dignified too, and quite formal.
Ties matching pyjamas were perfectly normal
(I wore one myself). Sometimes I stayed up late
until half-past seven, or rarely, ten to eight.

Houses then were not like our present poky affairs
—they had thousands of rooms, and vertical stairs
stretching up higher than you'd ever have guessed
possible, almost as high as Mount Everest.
Gardens were huge land-masses mapped
by intrepid explorers, continents wrapped
in this mystery of tulips, or that impenetrable
overgrowth, green, butterfly haunted, and vegetable.

Potatoes burst out of the earth like fat coins;
sunworshipping deckchair marrows varnished their loins
in the tropical heat; beans heaved, dangled and shook
to overweight bees bringing fresh insects to cook
in their scarlet ovens. Perpendicular rain
sluiced out of overblown thunderbags to drain
down the sheer cliffs of cabbagesides, daffodils
struck by lightning, sodden, drowned molehills.

Appetites were enormous with six cooked dishes
a day, and between meals sandwiches
thicker than haystacks layered with solid breeze-
blocks of butter, tomatoes and cucumber. Cheese-
burgers crowded with onions like an aircraft hanger
on Exhibition Day kept off the edge of hunger.

Thirst was proportionate of course, and I drank
bathfuls of cocoa, tea from the storage tank.
And in the old days, finally, habits were different;
gentle talk resolved people's differences, not argument,
bitter quarrels, a violent punch on a sore head,
armies in uniform, rifles, a nuclear warhead.
Proverbs and tender love songs were everyone's language
and just the right words for an imaginable golden age.
We listened to one another, and sat up straight,
told the truth always, did not exaggerate.

Peter Porter

Home and Hosed

To whom it may concern,
the matter of disposal of my body at my death—

I shall get the jokes over early.
My cat Flora is not likely to outlive me,
otherwise I would will her my feet and guts
and, of course, my genitals,
(about the weight of a small tin of Whiskas),
but we are still within the Unitary State
and may not feed our cats
on the riddling remnants of our lives.

No, consign it to the fire.
Take it to the undenominational ghats
set down drives of sycamores
beyond the golfing suburbs;
there the parsons are all locums,
prayers are culled from instances
of Anglican good taste and Presbyterian surprise,
the wreaths alone baroque
and Bach without belief washes our formal faces.

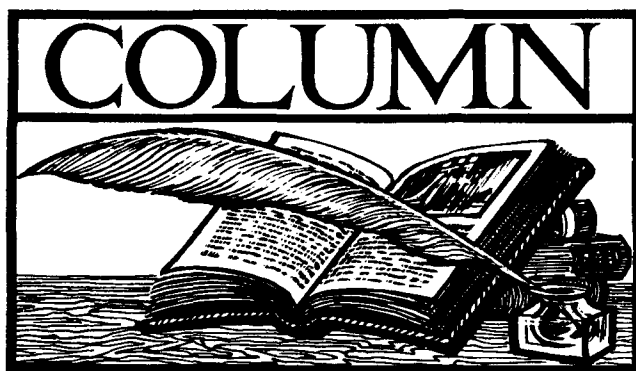
Keep this shell in which I hermited
far from the black and invoice-laden men
who cleanse our world of death.
The priggish Baron who told Mozart's widow
not to waste her cash on coffins
wasn't wrong—"ein schöne Leich"
fits out the Viennese for festival
but Mozart's unmarked resting place
is inspiration to us all. I summon up

the silly cardboard castles and ideal lodges
of Australian undertakers,
their presidencies of Rotary Clubs,
their Sunday programmes of soft music.
Surely the dead are livid at the living.

Hunter and hunted must come home.
Heaven which listened with ears of flesh
still sits insipid in the eaves of time;
Hell the forthright can't hold its own
against the newest movies; only blood,
blocked from tending to far-off oedemas,
races up-river to replete apocalypse.

I have limped far from high seriousness.
Assessors with my card in hand
will raise not a smile: "this flesh you were lent
is due for replacement, but yours is a case
without special merit. You made little sense
with your cries, bent no tonality
out of its rictus; you seem to us like
a sheep on an A road burst through a fence,
all tangle and terror. But, as proprietor
of some of our maker's immaculate filament,
you may call on the guarantee. Love,
great star of the terrified heavens,
shines on your head. It is time, true time
to give back your body. Know that the creek
keeps on flowing, the swallow skims to the wire,
someone is starting to climb up Saddleback."

The soul's straightforwardness is crimped in the fire.



SOME YEARS AGO, as sidekick to a VIP, I toured the atomic installations at Trombay, outside Bombay. Alert, self-confident technicians in white coats, resembling the “scientists” who “tell us” this or that in old-fashioned advertisements, quoted facts and figures and drew diagrams on blackboards. We stepped carefully round a “swimming-pool” reactor. We peered knowledgeably at girders. Then, each wearing a green plastic lapel badge, we were admitted to a reactor chamber. It meant as little to the layman as everything else—as if we’d entered a huge steel football or balloon. We did our Duke of Edinburgh act, nodding, hands clasped behind us, muttering “I see.” On the way out, our green badges were collected. “What for?” I asked the official. “Oh. Oh, well, you see, Sir, we shall test them now for, er, radioactivity.” “How long does that take?” “No more than a week.” His face fell rather when I said that we were flying back to Europe next morning.

I heard no more about it, so you can switch off the Geiger counter. But that scene—and one other—encapsulated for me the paradox that every traveller notes in India, as elsewhere. The second scene embodied it more sharply. That was the sight, outside the immaculate nuclear buildings, of women in mud-splashed saris carrying bricks on their heads, for the construction of a new wing.

Both scenes stirred in my memory at the time of the Bhopal disaster, heightening the fear that it’s perilous to crash-land high technology on terrain apparently ill-prepared for it. But that, it would seem, is precisely what has been happening more and more, faster and faster, since my emblematic afternoon at Trombay.

An unexpected Christmas gift arrived last year from an Indian friend in New Delhi. Square, flat, and heavy, it looked in its wrappings like a box of exotic sweetmeats. In fact, it was a book published two years earlier, but no less relevant today: a “Citizens’ Report by the Centre for Science and Environment in Delhi”, on *The State of India’s Environment 1982*.¹

Anyone at all involved in “Third World” or environmental issues can expect to become inured to turgid prose. Some reports on these subjects are literary battle-courses—designed, it would seem, to stretch the attention-span, toughen one’s tolerance of poisonous jargon, raise the

boredom threshold to unimagined heights. All over the world there seem to be verbiage factories—and verbiage collectors—never content with one abstraction where seven will do. Needless new coinages, in-group acronyms, bureaucratic euphemisms, pseudo-scientific periphrasis, covert political bias: if all that mush were mealie, nobody need starve. As it is, they asked bread and we gave them UNESCO.

The Indian “Citizens’ Report”, with its brown cover, its two-column format, its black-and-white photographs and boxes and statistical tables, looks at first sight like an addition to the mountain of bumph. In fact, it’s a model of brevity and straight talk. Lively, vivid, sensible, alarming, and argumentative, it even offers some fitful rays of hope.

Compiled in a hurry by a group of impatient experts, and edited by three of them, it often has a homely touch.

“We would have liked to check and cross-check every fact and figure but, given the size of the country, it was not always possible to do so. Errors in reporting, and at times even of understanding, are bound to have crept in. We hope the readers will excuse our lapses but, more importantly, that they will take the trouble to point them out to the editors.”

Announcing editions in Hindi and Malayalam, its authors “see the report beginning to reach far beyond the English medium crowd.”

Members of that crowd—I picture them at the race-course or the tennis-club, where *plus ça change, plus c’est la mamsahib*—will find plenty in the book which is new to them. So will Western readers. For me, the revelations fall into three categories. First, there’s the confirmation of India’s long-term, pre-existing plight. Secondly, there’s a mass of evidence to show that economic development, for all its obvious benefits, has exacted a terrible price, some of it clearly avoidable. Thirdly, there are several signs—of which this report is an instance—that Indians themselves are beginning to resist crash programmes, “great leaps forward”, and other ill-considered forms of grandiose ruthlessness which ruin while they enrich.

POVERTY, “BACKWARDNESS”, “under-development”, dirt, disease, and squalor—these, in India, come as no surprise. What may surprise a foreign reader are some of the statistics. Take water: 70% of it is polluted, and water-related diseases are thought to account for the loss of 73 million work-days a year. “Along every kilometre of the Ganga in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal, people and factories are pouring their garbage, excreta and muck into what is gradually turning from river to drain.” A third of the urban population—more than 50 million people—has no access to latrines of any kind. “Urban India is a collection of stink chambers.” About one-and-a-half million children die of diarrhoea every year—roughly, three a minute.

No one, surely, looking at these figures and the miserable reality they quantify, could begrudge India a Herculean effort to improve the lot of her people. Specifically, this must mean

¹ *The State of India’s Environment 1982: A Citizens’ Report*. Edited by ANIL AGARWAL, RAVI CHOPRA, and KALPANA SHARMA. Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, Rs 125.

“modernisation” and economic growth. But, by a cruel irony, some of the labours of Hercules have involved the sorcerer’s apprentice.

We’re all familiar with the “Dust Bowl.” India is fast acquiring a mud bowl. This is partly due to deforestation. Cooking, the report points out, absorbs half of India’s total energy consumption; and 90% of cooking uses firewood, cow dung, and crop wastes. This impoverishes the soil, already being depleted to make bricks. And every six months, more topsoil is washed away than has been used to build all India’s brick houses. In the last ten years, the area prone to flooding has doubled: in the Bay of Bengal, silt has produced a new island, Purbhasa, eleven kilometres long. Irrigation projects, with large-scale dams, have in some cases increased the land’s salt content; artificial fertilisers have boosted crop yields, but at the expense of existing micronutrients.

Water pollution, likewise, has increased with industrialisation and the expansion of towns. Before the Yamuna river enters Delhi, 100 millilitres of its water contain about 7,500 coliform organisms. By the time Delhi has added its waste products, the coliform count is 24 million. In the small Kalu river, more than 150 factories now discharge their effluent: mercury, in particular, enters the food chain and poisons not only fish and riverside cattle, but also those humans who live on them.

Air pollution is still more obvious. 60% of the inhabitants of Calcutta, it’s claimed, suffer as a result from respiratory diseases. Thanks to a 440-megawatt thermal power plant, Bhatinda in the Punjab “lies under a permanent blanket of smoke.” Fly ash—about a kilogram per inhabitant—coats every surface, including nearby crops. Even the Taj Mahal is thought to be under threat from an oil refinery 40 kilometres away. In the village of Nalavagulu in Karnataka, the soot and other by-products of a giant polyfibre factory are so powerful that a brass pitcher presented two years earlier to the local school actually crumbled when someone tried to lift it.

Some sorcerer’s-apprentice effects are more subtle. In Andhra Pradesh, villagers living near the Nagarjunasagar Dam have begun to suffer from the deformity known as *genu valgum* or acute knock-knees. Scientists from the National Institute of Nutrition in Hyderabad believe that this is indirectly due to seepage, which has raised the level of sub-soil water and increased the soil’s alkaline content. The result has been to change the balance of fluoride, calcium, and trace metals, and to encourage the absorption of molybdenum by sorghum plants—the staple diet of those too poor to afford rice. More molybdenum in the diet has meant a greater excretion of copper, and hence copper deficiency. Together with a very high fluoride intake, this is believed to explain the rapid growth of deformity.

A further health hazard is smoking. After the United States and China, India is the world’s third biggest producer of tobacco. This is a source of tax and export revenue: but Indians themselves consume three-quarters of what they grow. In the 1950s, annual cigarette consumption per adult was around 100. By the 1960s, this had doubled. Today, 90 billion cigarettes are sold every year—plus about 100 million *bidis*, small and very pungent cheroots. By the year 2000, some experts fear, India’s 900 million people may suffer the

same rates of cancer, heart disease, and other smoking-linked illness as those in the “developed” countries—but without the medical resources to cope.

So the ills of “civilisation” creep steadily forward. Every year, a million hectares of forest are cut down. 10% of India’s flora faces extinction. Elephants, once found throughout the country, have disappeared from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh. Delhi, whose number of motor vehicles more than doubled from 1971 to 1978, now has the highest accident rate in the world.

FORTUNATELY, INDIANS THEMSELVES are beginning to react against mindless “modernisation.” The best-known private effort is probably the *Chipko Andolan*—the “Movement to Hug Trees.” This began one morning in March 1973 in the remote hill town of Gopeshwar, where an Allahabad sports goods factory planned to cut down ten ash-trees. To prevent them, the villagers hugged the trees. Baulked there, the contractor tried another village 80 kilometres away. But the Gopeshwar villagers marched on the new site, beating drums and singing songs and gathering supporters on the way. Since then, the movement has developed into a “green” campaign, often involving women, and partly inspired by Gandhian principles.

Similar action groups have emerged in the cities. In Delhi, a students’ organisation has campaigned against tree felling

RLF

The initials stand for the **Royal Literary Fund**, which for nearly 200 years has helped authors in serious need and distress.

The RLF receives no subsidies and has to balance its own books with the works of others. So . . . if you are a profitable writer anxious to share your success with those less fortunate, or a general reader prepared to show appreciation of literature, the Secretary will be glad to hear from you.

The Committee is always ready, too, to consider in confidence applications from writers of approved literary merit who have fallen on hard times.

The Royal Literary Fund
144 Temple Chambers,
Temple Avenue,
London EC4Y 0DT

along the boulevards; in Calcutta and elsewhere, there are private efforts to improve slum housing; in Bombay, several voluntary organisations are trying to combat pollution.

Here and there, too, individuals have made disproportionate impact. A young woman architect from Chandigarh, Madhu Sarin, was inspired to design a new wood-burning stove when she saw a housewife in Nada village choking on the smoke from her traditional *chulha*—whose energy efficiency was only 5-10%. The new *Nada chulha*, with a damper and a chimney, is nearly twice as efficient, and could eventually almost halve the consumption of firewood. Likewise, an anonymous scientist more than a decade ago produced a simple technique for treating diarrhoea: replacing body fluids by a pinch of salt, a scoop of sugar, and a glassful of water several times a day. Again, a soil scientist in the Shivalik hills is credited with having saved a village whose over-grazed hillside was crumbling, by building three small reservoirs and replanting the hillside with trees, shrubs, and grass to be cut, not grazed.

But without Government action, all these projects would be merely drops in the ocean. India's Draft Sixth Plan admitted with startling honesty:

"The forests under management have . . . been treated from the very narrow viewpoint of production of commercial timber and pulpwood so that they have been rapidly converted to stands of teak, pine or eucalyptus with no thought given for even the maintenance of species producing valuable minor forest produce such as oilseeds.

Our wildlife conservation efforts have so far been primarily directed to the maintenance of areas with one or more spectacular animals such as the tiger or the rhino. This has led to a total neglect of many other ecosystems which lack such spectacular animals but are rich in floristic reserves.

So far attempts at environmental improvement in human settlements have come in a disjointed and piecemeal fashion with attention focussed on one particular function or the other (transportation, water supply, power generation, etc.) rather than treating settlements and their activities as a dynamic and organic whole."

For the five years 1980-85, only 400 million rupees went on official environmental programmes; and although India now has an impressive array of laws against pollution and depredation, such tragedies as that at Bhopal show how much still needs to be done. Rapacious developers, careless foremen, overworked or inefficient bureaucrats—the villains of the piece are no doubt many; but the underlying problem is one of priorities.

The authors of the "Citizens' Report" are in no doubt about what they believe is needed. "An environmentally enlightened development process", they conclude, "necessarily demands a new culture." This will be:

- "egalitarian, with reduced disparities between rich and poor and power equally shared by men and women;
- resource-sharing;
- participatory;
- frugal, when compared to the current consumption patterns of the rich;
- humble, with a respect for the multiplicity of the world's cultures and lifestyles; and
- it will aim at greater self-reliance at all levels of society."

You may not agree with all those items. But many of them, it seems to me, apply with equal force to Europe and America. We too would do well to ponder Mahatma Gandhi's dictum: "There is enough in the world for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed."

M

Houyhnhnm Visits Utah

He has seen the strip shows, the hoofy women
in their neon stables. There's one for every other man
in all the one-horse, coastal towns.

Now he's moving east, into the ex-badlands,
among Utah red rock, Utah red sand,
and of course, dead grass.

In the evenings he eats the skies
(which are also very red) and sits under a saddle blanket,
chattering with cold women.

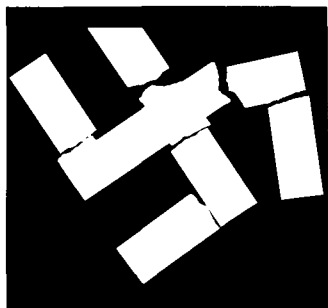
He takes mornings between his teeth. The flat earth,
(which is as flat as table, floor and bed)
crumbles, friable as beautified flesh.

Jonathan Wonham

NOTES & TOPICS

Bitter Defeat, Total Occupation

The German-French Difference—By A. G. KAGENECK



THE SCENE is well known: the picture of German cities in what is called *das Jahr Null*, the catastrophe, the total defeat and the unconditional surrender—ruins, misery, a dazed and despairing population . . . and yet, for all that, a certain peculiar dignity in the rubble, with the broken stones pushed back to make

sidewalks again, with few beggars and no recalcitrant werewolves.

In another spring, some five years earlier, another great European power, France, had also suffered a total military capitulation. Is there a useful comparison?

Certainly not from a military point of view. France's forces were beaten on the mainland as often in its history; but there was still a considerable fleet, and bases in a world-wide colonial empire. France had an ally in Great Britain, resolutely fighting on, and a potential partner in President Roosevelt's America. There was a General in London who refused to accept the surrender of France: only a battle had been lost, not the war. And there was, last if also least (as it turned out), a legitimate government in place, headed by a World War I hero who had taken the reins before the capitulation and had formally petitioned, according to international law, for a cease-fire.

None of this was true for Germany. The *Reich* had also been totally conquered and all of its land-mass occupied; but it had "unconditionally surrendered", had neither allies nor a government, and had morally disintegrated together with its criminal Nazi régime, leaving its people completely at the disposition of the conquerors. Nobody was to flee across the frontiers to raise a hue-and-cry for resistance. There wasn't the slightest chance of reversing the fortunes of war which had brought the Allies a famous victory. There were no elements among the battered German armies or in the shattered civilian population that could conceivably be mustered to take up arms and fight on. There was no such alternative motive, spirit, or perspective.

"When one loses a world war", one German writer (Peter

Bamm) has sensitively observed, "one is not in quite such a desperate situation as the victors often tend to believe. One thinks back to the day when hostilities ceased (in May 1945). The defeated looked up with relief, and even rapture, at a sky now free from bombers—which had, in their way, prepared us rather well for everything and anything that might now happen to us, no matter what. We had learned to take and accept the hardest of blows, all with a certain equanimity. It was our own follies that we had to learn to deal with, for twice in the century the Germans were put in the position of taking on a challenge of catastrophe. On both occasions they had the advantage of starting up again from nothing or very little. To recall those wild 'jungle days' is to be overcome a little with a still sadness, if not nostalgia. Those were days when we would learn to be friends, to work together with each other. . . ."

IF THIS IS SO, what then was the comparable spirit among the French? They too had their "jungle", and it lasted almost as long—four-and-a-half years. But an analogy between Germany and France has to confine itself only to the elemental historic fact of total defeat and occupation. After that everything is different. There was no *Jahr Null*, no "Year Zero", when every major city lay in ruins. There were no extremes of hunger and an absolute struggle for naked physical survival. Maintaining dignity on an empty stomach was not exactly the challenge. The French were a people whose peasant population amounted, at the time, to some 55%, and they knew how to scrape together food for a square meal; and even by means of an effective "grey market" to keep supplying France's towns and cities. There were imports from the African colonies, and of course there was an administration, no longer in Paris but in Vichy, yet still capable of some measures of national organisation and coordination.

To be sure, the defeat of May 1940 had constituted a shock for the nation, as France crashed from the pedestal of century-old fame as "the greatest military power in Europe." Was it some secret internal affliction which had in six brief weeks stricken the French with "a sickness unto death"? Well, they didn't want to "die for Danzig", and they didn't. The *poilus* of 1940 cried out to the German soldiers, "*La guerre est finie!*", as if the whole affair had been a brief misunderstanding.

The aged Marshal in Vichy put the blame on "yesterday's men", the old régime of parties and politicians, and offered a new national slogan on behalf of "family . . . work . . . and fatherland." The people were to roll up their sleeves and get to work, make their deals with the occupiers, blame everything on

AUGUST GRAF KAGENECK lives in Paris and writes regularly for the German press; he is the foreign correspondent of "Die Welt" (Bonn).

the English, and be grateful that the Germans were keeping the Bolsheviks from their door. No one would listen to the General in London. Life would go on. Somehow it would all end well.

It was an idyllic vision, and it lasted until that moment on the 15th of August 1941 when, in the Paris Métro station Barbès-Rochechouart, a German serviceman named Franz Moser was shot by the Communist resistance fighter "Colonel Fabien." It was, as we now know, a well-planned assassination (or "execution", in the terrorist phrase of our day); and it did not fail to ignite the chain-reaction of violence, with repression following terror and sparking counter-terror in turn. It would (and did) end only on the day of liberation. But between 15 August 1941 and 25 August 1944 lay three years. These, according to French historians, must be reckoned as "the nation's worst days since the French Revolution", and many make comparisons with the years of terror under Marat and Robespierre et al.

The historian Henri Amouroux has recently completed the sixth volume of his epochal work on the years of Occupation during World War II, and he calls the year 1943 a time of "the most merciless civil war." Jacques Soustelle, once the special Gaullist representative in Occupied France, phrases it more euphemistically as "the year in which Frenchmen ceased to love one another. . . ." *Le Figaro* has referred to "the chaos of internecine warfare" which overcame the country. *Le Monde*, reviewing Amouroux' work, praises the courage of "finally" looking the truth in the face.

What are they getting at? What had been happening was the great turning-points of World War II—Stalingrad, the American landings on the south Mediterranean shore, the new German demands on France for badly-needed arms and manpower. All made for a new situation, as tens of thousands of young Frenchmen, who may well up until then have had only

the vaguest notion of the *maquis* and the Resistance, fled into the "underground." Their parents who had been patiently "getting along"—"collaborating", if you will—now came to see in the face of "Fritz" the hated mug of the *Boche*.

The expansion of the Resistance movement began to pose new problems of leadership and especially political dominance among the various strands cooperating in the underground struggle. The Communist Party, which had of course itself turned away from "collaboration" when the Soviet Union was attacked, was concerned about its controlling positions. More arms were needed; would they get the weapons? Neither General de Gaulle nor the British political command were exactly enthusiastic about giving Moscow a "military base" in the Western camp; and in any case the Allied heavy commitment was to bomb the Germans in French bases with their own might and main.

Needless to say, the collaborators (no small contingent) made much of these difficulties, as they continued to have faith in the ultimate German victory, and some were even enthusiastic enough for "National-Socialism" to volunteer for French units fighting alongside the *Wehrmacht*. (One such unit actually tried to defend Hitler's bunker in Berlin.) Later on the members of such units, including the militia which was recruited to root out the terrorists, were mercilessly brought to rough justice in the so-called *épuration*; the motto here was "two eyes for an eye", and "for a tooth the whole jaw."

SO FOR SOME 19 months something approaching a civil war raged among Frenchmen. Denunciation became a daily civic preoccupation; terror countered terror, and continued collaboration induced redoubled revenge. So much mounting hate on all sides could only produce that series of purges, wholesale "liquidation" of enemies of the nation, which followed the liberation of French territory by the Allied armies.

Most of it, now recognised as being the most naked kind of "lynch justice", came to an end during 1947. Nobody can know exactly how many Frenchmen were done away with during (in Amouroux's phrase) this "*impitoyable guerre civile*." Some estimates refer to 100,000, which would be about ten times the number of casualties which France suffered in the brief campaign of 1940.

All of this, of course, inflicted deep wounds and has left ugly scars on the French body politic. From time to time they are opened and bleed again. Some time ago two members of the opposition in the Chamber accused President Mitterrand of "a shady past." An unsavoury discussion raged around the former police commissioner of Paris, a Minister under de Gaulle, over his role in the "extraditing" of French Jews to the Germans in 1943. As for the leader of the Communist Party, how was it that instead of joining the ranks of the *maquis* in the Resistance underground, he found a job in Augsburg at the Messerschmitt plant making planes for the *Luftwaffe*? Nobody gets "lynched" nowadays, except in the sense of having one's reputation hanging like an effigy; but the ugliest of accusations are rife as if the line was still being drawn in the old simple-minded way between "resistance here, collaboration there."

Things Past



MANY OLDER French people approach the D-Day commemoration with mixed emotions, remembering the bitterness of defeat in 1940, the humiliation of the Occupation and the embarrassing years of collaboration with the Nazis. The extent of physical and moral degradation suffered by the French during the Occupation has become a taboo subject. More books have been written about it in America than in France.

Last week, M. Chaban-Delmas, Prime Minister under President Pompidou, and another Resistance

hero, said on television: "It is time we discussed what really happened during the War."

Recognition of the British and American role in the liberation, though genuine in France, has always been accompanied by a feeling of discomfort that despite the important contribution of the Free French and the *Maquis*, freedom was a gift from the Allies. Magazines, newspapers and the media are this week reviving all these memories.

Michael Field
reporting from Paris

in the DAILY TELEGRAPH (London)

The fatal falling-out among Frenchmen in defeat and occupation is far from being overcome.

Is there any parallel with what the Germans went through following their surrender and occupation by conquering armies? On the surface of things, if one confines oneself only to the Western military zones of Germany, there would appear to be very little similarity. In France a kind of "revolution" took place. In Germany there was a deadly quiet, as if a whole nation and people had been mortally wounded, waiting only for some miraculous form of resurrection. Fateful history had drawn a line and closed a book; what was to come would be written on new white pages.

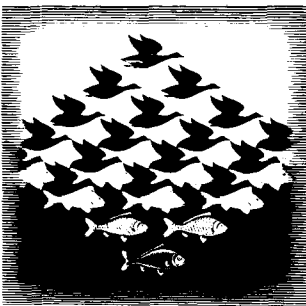
No such books were closed in France. A few pages were torn out here and there, and now they are being pasted back in. If one can risk the fanciful semantic by-play, the German concern for *Werden* and the French involvement with *existence* took on political flesh and blood. The Germans wanted to "become" something else, wanted to put the past behind them; they would now become a part of "the West", good Europeans, loyal allies. The French could not escape existential realities, and were driven to confront the shameful events of the recent

past with some new and decisive commitment to their own special national identity. If need be, they would have a big Bomb of their very own; if there was no other way, they would try and find themselves in splendid isolation. Both nations had skeletons in their closets, and both dealt with them in different ways. The burden for relations between the two ancient antagonists was heavy.

Still, there was "the European idea" as a bridge, and on both sides of the Rhine emerged bridging figures: Dr Adenauer and Robert Schuman. This would hardly have been enough if another historic factor had not emerged on the scene to divert the drama to another stage—the Eastern superpower with its totalitarian expansionism. For all the variations of attitudes in "the Cold War" and in the ideology of French and German anti-Communism, it is in this common context that the divisive national excesses of preoccupation with the past lost most of their point and poignancy. The German Chancellor may not have been invited to share in the glorious sentimentalities of the D-day celebrations last year in Normandy, but what both the French and the Germans share in all other respects is the deep present need for collective security, as if in a common vow: nations must never go through the tragic humiliations of defeat and occupation again.

Left to Right?

Ideological Memoirs—By MAX BELOFF



THERE IS SOMETHING especially interesting about reviewing an autobiography by one's exact contemporary. When Professor Ferns was born in Alberta in 1913, Sir Robert Borden was Prime Minister of Canada; when I was born in London in the same year, Herbert Henry Asquith was Prime Minister of

the United Kingdom, the Kaiser, the Emperor Franz Josef and Nicholas II were on their thrones, and Lenin was an obscure exile in Switzerland. What does one come to think about politics after all that has happened since then? I suppose that today both of us would be classified as "on the Right"—hence the title that Professor Ferns has chosen for his book¹—yet the differences between us are perhaps almost as considerable as the differences in our respective experiences. Although we came together over the founding of what is now the University of Buckingham, we cannot be said to have influenced each other; but this absorbing book may help others, as it has helped me, to define my position.

Certainly Professor Ferns' experience both of life and of

the life of ideas has been very different from my own. The achievement of any degree of higher education in the Canada of the Depression years for someone of modest background was itself a formative experience. To come from that background to Cambridge was perhaps an even more decisive event, both because of what Professor Ferns came to admire in Cambridge and in England—and he is still an Anglophile, if not an optimistic one—and because of what he came to resent. Much has been written about the Communist connection in the Cambridge of the 1930s of which Professor Ferns was part, though not all those touched by its influence took Marxism as seriously as he did, or took so long to eradicate it or, perhaps one should say, transcend it. But one cannot help wondering what would have happened if Professor Ferns had found his way to Oxford rather than Cambridge—all this might then have touched him more lightly. Once again, one feels that what led Cambridge men across the barriers of patriotism to flirt with treason—or in some deadly cases to practise it—was a degree of intellectual arrogance combined with an insulation from the real world that has been so marked in Cambridge for so long.

The intellectual odyssey of Professor Ferns had, however, many other adventures to offer. It was the Nazi-Soviet Pact that, as for others, was the signal if not for a rapid reversal of course, at least for questioning the true motives of Soviet policy. Going back to find some outlet for the wish to serve the cause of freedom, Professor Ferns found his ties with the Communists slipping; he had no need of them, and they as it

¹ *Reading from Left to Right: One Man's Political History.* By H. S. FERNS. University of Toronto Press. \$24.95, £21.20.

ROBERT RUBENS once again uncovers his wonderful world of eccentrics in



SBN 85974 119 2 232pp Pubn. April 1985 Net £7.50

Previous novels by Robert Rubens were praised highly by Graham Greene, Sir Angus Wilson, The Times Literary Supplement, The Guardian, The Sunday Telegraph, Contemporary Review and others.

In this latest novel Mr Rubens takes another step forward in his unique blend of psychological insight, witty social comedy and acute awareness of the tempo of contemporary life.

BACHMAN & TURNER, Unit PP, Maidstone Industrial Centre, St Peter Street, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0ST.
Tel: 0622 681034



10-12 April 1985
Public hours 3 to 6.30 pm

£1 off normal admission

For admission at the special price of £2 please bring this completed ad on 10 or 11 April to

Reception Desk hall B, Barbican Exhibition Halls
Golden Lane, London EC2

3 pm to 6.30 pm daily

You will then be issued with a pass and information kit. Admission without this ad will be £3. We regret that under 14's are not admitted. Kindly note that there are no crèche facilities and push-chairs are not allowed in the halls.

Please complete in block letters

Mr/Mrs/Ms _____

Address _____

Occupation _____

Source of this ad _____

seemed no need of him. Unable to serve in an active capacity, Professor Ferns found himself a Canadian civil servant in the entourage of Mackenzie King. By nature nonconformist, and with decided views of his own, the connection was not a lasting one, but the experience was to prove valuable in giving something of the feel of the way in which politics is an activity not to be judged by simple criteria of alleged ends and apparent means.

Professor Ferns' resignation from government service was followed by a renewed attempt to establish himself as a Canadian academic, including another period of post-graduate study, at Chicago this time—an interlude that effectively immunised him against the anti-Americanism of the Canadian kind and equally against the more fundamental anti-Americanism of the European Left. The attempt to get into a more normal career pattern was inhibited partly by his wish to be active in wider affairs—an unsuccessful attempt to launch a new daily paper in Winnipeg belongs to this period—and by being caught up in the overspill of "McCarthyism" into Canada. It was back to England, and this time for good.

THE DECADES SPENT by Professor Ferns in the University of Birmingham were, if more tranquil, as intellectually stimulating—and not merely for his establishment of a reputation as an authority on Argentina. The chapter on Argentina in his book—a brilliant encapsulation of the view that if ever a country undid itself through political folly and still goes on whining about it as though it was someone else's fault—is a gem of political and economic analysis.

Birmingham also brought Professor Ferns into contact with three significant features of the post-War British university scene. He came up against the tactics of Communist and Leftist penetration through their efforts to secure University posts for adherents to that camp at the expense of intellectual merit, and was once and for all branded as a "reactionary" for seeking to maintain academic values against such pressure. He also came on the scene as the head of a faculty of social science at a time when the discipline of economics was in revolt against the supposition that economics and the real world of production and commerce had no close connection; and he had to witness the gradual success of the econometricians in making their point of view the accepted orthodoxy:

"When one considers that it took the war in Viet Nam to expose the inadequacies of systems analysis and a world depression to bring into doubt the expertise of economists in general, I do not feel too guilty about my inability to translate into administrative practice my private belief that modern economics, like much else in academic social science and aesthetics, is a kind of dressmaking for a lifeless god."

The period was also one in which public money was poured without stint into the Universities, often in a wasteful fashion, and above all in a way which diminished the responsibility of individual teachers and institutions to make the best of their resources. The puritanism of the Canadian prairies first made Ferns doubt the system and then rebel against the whole statist philosophy that underlay it.

AND so by the late 1960s we find Ferns the ex-Marxist proclaiming a political philosophy which minimises any constructive role for the State and sees government as the enemy rather than the instrument of social purposes. Professor Ferns is quite right to claim that what became the University of Buckingham was a product of anti-statist thinking and not a reaction to the student riots which came later, or to the submission of University accounts to state audit which has made very little difference to the existing system. If anyone is to be regarded as the founding father he is.

Yet it is in looking at the subsequent fortunes of his creation that the weakness in his own present position is first revealed. For he claims that it was only English snobbery that led to the institution's wish to have a Royal Charter and all that goes with it. It was not. Professor Ferns' idea was that instead of government money a University should sell its wares in the market and thrive or fall like any other business. But a market requires buyers as well as sellers. Why should students want to go to an institution unless the degrees they acquire will serve them well in their future careers? And despite what Professor Ferns says about the common law, in this country a Royal Charter (or Act of Parliament) alone gives unquestioned validity, international as well as national, to an academic qualification.

One could quote against Professor Ferns on this point what he says of his own failure to establish a new and more radical newspaper:

"Falling in love with an idea, as I did, is a harmless enough thing to do as long as one merely puts the idea into a book or article. Attempting to translate an idea into an instrument of social action is quite another matter—immensely more difficult and demanding from the individual much more than brains and imagination and having consequences for others which are incalculable."

Exactly.

Professor Ferns has ended up with a view of politics owing something to Hobbes and something to Rousseau, and most of all perhaps to the *Federalist* Papers. It has to take into account man's frailties but also his need to distinguish between right and wrong, and his inability to deduce right and wrong from mere observation. Whether this puts Ferns in the same camp as Malcolm Muggeridge (who has written a preface) I rather doubt. But it does demand for consistency a willingness to seek in observation for the confirmation of one's practical beliefs. Anti-statism is as much of a dogma as statism itself.

TO ONE CONVICTION Professor Ferns has been consistent throughout his passage across the political spectrum—the faith of an anti-imperialist, imbibed as a Canadian and fortified by his Cambridge contacts with opponents of British rule overseas. Yet would not the post-Imperial scene also deserve scrutiny before a judgment is reaffirmed? Have the ordinary people whose welfare Professor Ferns puts above the ambitions of politicians really done so well out of their "independence"? Mrs Gandhi's troops killed more people in Amrit-

HOSTAGES TO FORTUNE

by

WILLIAM HUMPHREY



What the American critics said:

"William Humphrey is more than an accomplished raconteur. He has a grand ear. His descriptions of the land's brooding presence and how it works its moods on people, is at once reminiscent of Faulkner and William Styron."

**The New York Times
Book Review**

"A powerful novel by a marvellously gifted writer, one of the best we have . . . Not since Faulkner have we had a writer who evokes so much force and skill."

The Washington Post

"Humphrey has never been better. A story of heart-breaking dimensions . . . Cogent, absorbing, affecting."

Publishers Weekly

"This remarkable book is the rarest of things . . . a devastating, impressive, astonishing book."

Chicago Tribune

"Enthralling. Told with lacerating intelligence. An extraordinary novel."

Newsday

An Alison Press Book

15th April

**Secker &
Warburg**

£8.95

sar than General Dyer's did; and India is the most successful by far of the successor states of any size.

We are dealing in this book not just with a mind but also with a temperament—that of the sempiternal radical. Professor Ferns may have quitted the Left as we define it today. I am not quite sure he has reached the Right. Each reader must judge, and the effort will be worth while.

Demythifying Mao

China's Insoluble Dilemma

By Brian Crozier



THE GREAT HELMSMAN must be writhing in his unquiet grave: less than a decade after his death in September 1976, the dismantling of Maoism is still gathering momentum in that Chinese People's Republic which he created and fashioned in his own expansive image.

The driving force behind the sweeping changes now in progress,

Deng Xiaoping (or Teng Hsiao-p'ing, old-style), is 80 and for seven years during and immediately after Mao's "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" was in disgrace. His son was defenestrated by the Red Guards (he survived, though paralysed). Mao's term of abuse for him was "capitalist-roader." To an astonishing extent, the diminutive survivor of the Long March is living up to Mao's dismissive label.

The key question, which must be addressed but which even now cannot be answered with certainty, is whether the current wave of "reforms" in People's China will so alter the country's economic base that the change will prove irreversible. If it does, the Anglo-Chinese agreements on the future of Hong Kong will be retrospectively vindicated, despite the sceptical doubts of the critics (myself included).

It is important to understand the nature of Deng's "Four Reforms" (Agriculture, Industry, Science & Technology, and Defence) and to measure the changes against what is *not* changing: the apparently immutable political and administrative structure of China's totalistic régime. In the long term, what matters is whether the changes become so extensive that the structure collapses under the weight of its own irrelevance; or, alternatively, whether the survival of the structure implies future upheavals that will sweep the changes away in a revival of Maoism.

Centralised planning has not been abolished, but its scope has been severely restricted. The mandatory Plan concen-

trates on such priorities as energy and basic raw materials. Agriculture has been largely freed of the dead hand of central control, and is thriving as a result. The output of "small commodities" is left to private producers and market forces.

The most spectacular experiment is the creation of "Special Economic Zones", such as Shenzhen, close to capitalistic Hong Kong and now complete with its own quota of skyscrapers and open to foreign investment.

There has been a ruthless drive against crime, marked by thousands of executions, not only for crimes of violence but (as in the Soviet Union) for such "economic crimes" as corruption and embezzlement.

What of the Communist Party, with its 40 million members? It is in this fundamental area that the dilemmas facing Deng Xiaoping are truly agonising, as in any other Communist State. As the vanguard of the people, the Party is always right, at any given time, even when radical changes of course demonstrate that it must have been wrong. The gigantic purge initiated in October 1983 was aimed specifically at "Leftist cadres" who had risen to prominence by following the Lin Biao-Jiang Qing (Lin Piao-Chiang Ch'ing) cliques; those who indulged in "beating, smashing, and looting" during the Cultural Revolution; and those who are "seriously factionalist in their ideas." In other words, those who followed Mao's orders and those who continue to oppose Deng Xiaoping and his policies.

The dilemma is essentially insoluble, and identical in kind with the problem of Stalin and Stalinism in the USSR. In effect Maoism, particularly of the demented last years, is rejected. But how can Mao himself, as the creator of the régime inherited by Deng and his followers, be similarly repudiated? Thus the 90th anniversary of Mao's birth (on 26 December 1983) was celebrated by the reissue of his books, the reopening to the public of his home in Shaoshan (in Hunan province), the broadcasting of a television film about his early life, and acres of press coverage.

THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION (if there is one) to the Chinese dilemma is obviously of major importance to the rest of the world. Is it sensible for the Western powers and Japan to help to modernise China's economy, including its defence sector? Can China, in a permanent sense, be regarded as "a bulwark against Soviet communism"?

The nature of the problem is rooted in the extraordinary life and times of Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong, new-style), by far the most complete and most penetrating account of which is now available in the late Eric Chou's *Mao Tse-tung: The Man and the Myth*.¹

This very important book has a chequered history which deserves a few words. To declare an interest, Eric Chou, a Chinese journalist and scholar, was a friend and associate of mine, whose research, memories and advice were of great value to me when I wrote my own biography of Chiang Kai-shek (*The Man who Lost China*, 1977).

¹ *Mao Tse-tung: The Man and the Myth*. By ERIC CHOU. Cassell, £12.95.

Chou was uniquely placed to write a definitive life of Mao. He had talked with Mao and knew many of the Chinese Communist leaders, especially Chou En-lai. He had switched from supporting the Kuomintang to running the pro-Peking newspaper *Ta Kung Pao*, in Hong Kong. He had, nevertheless, been kept in solitary confinement in Peking for nearly four years, before being sent back to Hong Kong, supposedly "brainwashed", to spy on the British and Americans. Finally, in 1961, he had "chosen freedom" and defected to a happier life in Britain.

He had scarcely finished correcting the proofs of his book, in 1980, when he died. Coincidentally, hard times hit the publishers and publication was delayed until the spring of 1984, with a surprising absence of fanfare. (These circumstances help to account for the curious details on the flyleaf, which record the copyright as 1982 and claim, misleadingly, that the book was first published in 1980.)

So deeply anchored was the myth of Mao that when he died, most Western newspapers, including that pillar of Tory conservatism, the London *Daily Telegraph*, published quite nauseatingly hagiographic obituaries. Yet as a mass murderer, Mao was in the Stalin class, even if one discounts the more extreme figures disseminated by the Nationalists and their American allies during the 1960s (the figures ranged up to 25 million killed during the "land reform" of 1950). Eric Chou attributes an estimate of between 6 and 7 million to Mao himself (p.177). To these must be added the millions murdered by Mao's "Red Guards" during the Cultural Revolution.

As with other megalomaniacs in history, Mao did nothing by halves. The destruction of China's already weak economy during the "Great Leap Forward" and of his country's heritage during the Cultural Revolution has to be added to the negative side of the balance sheet.

One of the great merits of Eric Chou's work is its objectivity. Unmoved by the Maoist mythology, he presents a dispassionate portrait of one of history's *monstres sacrés*: the coarseness of the peasant, the callousness and unbending will of a "Chinese Lenin", a traditional poet of epic gifts (whose calligraphy, however, he considers overrated). Another merit, carried almost to the point of excess, is an English style of exceptional sparseness and conciseness. Although Chou's text runs to a mere 252 pages, plus appendices, all phases of Mao's life are covered in some detail.

MAO DID NOT INVENT the Party as a device for absolute rule, and his initial status in the Chinese Communist Party was a junior one. But in defying Stalin, he moulded it in his own image with his heretical insistence on the key role of the peasantry. His techniques of coercion, including the "mass line" and the relentless pressure of continuous "persuasion", lend themselves now to anti-Maoist thought-reform.

There is a nightmarish quality about current reports (I write in December 1984) on the work of the CCP's Central Commission for "Guiding Policy Rectification." The orthodoxy has changed; the methods for enforcing the newly approved orthodoxy have not.

In his last chapter, "The Future of Maoism", Eric Chou expresses the view that if the modernisation initiatives of Deng

NEW EDITION

The Oxford Companion to English Literature

Edited by Margaret Drabble

This new edition is a fundamental revision of the original Companion—about 90 per cent rewritten—which serves the needs of the modern reader while retaining the qualities that made the old book a favourite.
0 19 866130 4 £15 Publication 25 April

The English Language

Robert Burchfield

An introduction to the history and present state of English. 'I find this book utterly fascinating. Rarely have I enjoyed more a learned work from which I have gathered so much.' A. L. Rowse, *Financial Times*
'an expert, absorbing guidebook.' John Carey, *Sunday Times*

0 19 219173 X £9.50 An OPUS book

Frost: A Literary Life Reconsidered

William H. Pritchard

'I have made a life study of what I can say', Frost once wrote, and it is his 'sayings'—in poems, letters, notebook jottings, and countless recorded interviews and public appearances—on which William Pritchard has drawn to present this portrait.

0 19 503462 7 £14.95 OUP New York

Dorothy Wordsworth

Robert Gittings and Jo Manton

The first biography of this key figure in the literature of the Romantic period to treat her as a person in her own right. She emerges as a more strange, wayward, and human figure than convention has portrayed.

0 19 818519 7 £12.50 Clarendon Press

Letters of Dorothy Wordsworth: A Selection

Edited by Alan G. Hill

Alan G. Hill presents seventy complete letters drawn from the new and enlarged edition of *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*.

0 19 818539 1 £9.95 Clarendon Press

Fair of Speech: The Uses of Euphemism

Edited by D. J. Enright

When is a euphemism a mark of good taste? What happened to the French verb *baiser*? Can a bomb ever be 'clean'? The answers, or possible answers to these and many other questions are offered by sixteen distinguished contributors.

0 19 212236 3 £9.95 Publication 11 April

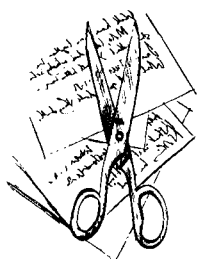
Oxford University Press

and the other pragmatists succeed by the end of the century, upheavals such as "the Great Leap Forward" and "the Cultural Revolution" are unlikely to be repeated. But failure will bring a return to Maoist excesses of the worst kind. He does not envisage the possibility that modernisation, if successful, may cause the collapse of Party rule. Yet anything short of such a collapse would seem to be a recipe for future upheavals.

The outside world, especially, has an interest in the survival

or demise of China's version of Leninism in its Comintern sense. For some years after the split with Moscow, Peking indulged in what I termed at the time "competitive subversion" with the Soviets, mainly in the Third World. The evidence suggests that Chinese aid to Communist guerrillas and terrorists in South-east Asia and elsewhere has ceased. Yet there has been no formal renunciation of Leninism, although sacrilegious doubts have been cast on the continued relevance of Marx. To discard Lenin would be a much bigger step, so long

Sherlock Holmes & Socialist Realism



SHERLOCK HOLMES was always involved in shady matters of good and evil, and his most recent career—newly presented, as he has been by novelists and film directors, as a hopeless drug addict or an uncontrollable neurotic—

has updated his relevance to sharp-eyed observers of the contemporary scene. Including, especially, the censors. Blue pencils have become sharper in various government offices where well-instructed officials have arrogated to themselves the power to keep language pure and metaphorical reference safe and sound.

In Russia, to be sure, the translations have a traditional reliability and have for generations been favourite and best-selling reading matter. Keeping up with the popularity of the Conan Doyle hero, the Soviet television establishment has recently made a film of "The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes." But the censors heard a dangerous barking in the dark of the night, and pronounced the film "ideologically harmful." The clue was not hard to find. It lay in the remark made by Holmes to Dr Watson (who, then, was not yet his friend and chronicler):

"How are you? You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive."

Watson is surprised, even astonished (and not for the last time). But Holmes has spotted the tell-tale evidence: the stiff, injured arm of an army doctor bearing a tropical tan—where else could the injury have been sustained, if not Afghanistan!

The subject is evidently a very sensitive matter in Moscow; the TV producers were reprimanded, and the passage was censored. It became: "You have been in a country in the Orient, I perceive" A

bit vague for a bloodhound of Holmes's ultra-sensitive nose—but there are obviously dangers in making geographical references too precise . . . enough to suggest "here be monsters."

WHERE THE RUSSIANS LEAD, the Czechs can't be far behind. The Prague writer Josef Skvorecky tells the story of the new translation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Sign of Four." At one point Holmes is giving melodramatic chase to a smugglers' boat on the Thames, and exclaims:

"Ah, there is the 'Aurora'! And going like the devil!"

But the new translation has the detective noting:

"Ah, there is the 'Naiad'! And going like the devil!"

What had happened—why was the vessel re-christened in mid-flight? Well, the "Aurora" happened to be the great and unforgettable battle-cruiser whose guns signalled the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. As Skvorecky notes, "It goes without saying that a boat used for criminal purposes must not bear that sacred name." In any event, whatever she was called, Holmes would spot her, trail her, follow her evil crew to the end.

IF, AFTER ALL, Conan Doyle couldn't really have known better, more modern authors—and film directors—have to be looked at with even greater vigilance. Take Bohumil Hrabal, one of the best known Czech writers, whose story was the basis for the Oscar-winning film, "Closely Observed Trains", made by Jiri Menzel. Hrabal did not quite get back into good standing after the events of 1968 and accordingly his short novel "The Village Where Time Has Stopped" became available only in "samizdat", in an émigré edition. Subsequently he rewrote it, eliminating what might get him into renewed trouble. In most cases it is not very hard to know how the mind of even the most sensitive censor works.¹

Thus, in the original edition there is a scene in which a sacked manager sentimentally requests that he may take two

old office lamps with green shades as souvenirs of his 25 years of service. But the Party-liners are hard men and not to be moved:

"... the working-class manager, waiting for his opportunity, threw both lamps out of the window and on to a junk-heap where the green shades splintered, and [Francin] pressed his palms to his temples, for something cracked in his head as if his brain had been shattered, and the working-class director said: 'A new era is beginning!' . . ."

Years passed; Hrabal recanted, and was readmitted to the Prague Writers' Union; and a new edition of his old novella was released under the title "Harlequin's Millions." The new director is no longer a rude and ruthless fellow, but a kindly character, and he feels sorry for the old manager. He finally turns to his factory committee members and asks:

"Well, what do you think, comrades? Shall we not be magnanimous? Take the lamps as souvenirs of old times which were good to you."

THE DIFFERENCE is between "realism" and "socialist realism." Curiously enough the author had seen the transition coming, and indeed with Holmes-like acumen had spotted the danger and the tragedy.

In a book published in 1969, and then seized and banned by the censors, Bohumil Hrabal predicted his own fate. In "The Buds" this scene is described:

"A cab driver drove me this year from the Barrandov studios, and suddenly he asked me, laughing: 'You're Mr Hrabal?' I said: 'Well, I am.' And he said: 'Heh, heh, so they've outsmarted you, haven't they? You wanted to be a "poète maudit", and they've turned you into a socialist realist. That's what I call an achievement!' "

Holmes would have spotted the difference, and Watson might have told the tale of "Closely Observed Authors", or why the censor barked at midnight.

François Bondy

¹ See: Vladimir Voinovich, "Sidelights on Censorship", SURVEY, Autumn 1984; and Josef Skvorecky, "A Cabaret of Censorship", INDEX ON CENSORSHIP, October 1984.

as the Party retains its monopoly of power. Indeed, in China as in the Soviet Union, Leninism remains the only source of legitimacy for the ruling group. Therein lies the apparently insoluble dilemma which inevitably casts a deep shadow over China's future.

Letter from Paris

Sartre, the Illustrious Innocent

By François Fejtő



SOME YEARS AFTER his death, the *Quotidien de Paris* asked a number of intellectuals to give their judgments on the author of *L'Être et le néant*. Fair or not, the following comments seem to me to be particularly significant:

OLIVIER TODD: "One can admire the novelist, the dramatist . . . and reckon that Sartre made some monumental political mistakes."

ALAIN FINKIELKRAUT: "He was a dangerous habitual offender in illusion, a stubborn fellow-traveller of all the revolutionary disasters of the last half-century."

EMANNUEL LE ROY LADURIE: "Sartre was certainly a very great writer. But taken altogether, he was enormously mistaken."

ANNIE KRIEGLER: "Young people don't read Sartre any more. Doesn't he owe his oblivion to the gigantic sum of false analyses and inconsistencies that strewed his political path?"

MICHEL LE BRIS: "He supported the USSR through the worst moments of the exposure of the Gulag. He also supported Fidel Castro. The intellectuals followed him like sheep."

Ten years before he died, Sartre said to a group of his friends: "It's time I finally told the truth. One day I shall write a kind of political will and testament. . . . I'll reveal what I really thought, and what I think now with hindsight. I know some people who'll grind their teeth—myself included. . . ." Sartre did not have the time—or, perhaps, the courage—to write that last will and testament. One of his former emulators, Michel-Antoine Burnier (to whom we already owe a brilliant parody of Roland Barthes) has deputised for him.¹ And just as it is the ex-Stalinists who have written the best books on Stalinism, it is this ex-Sartrean who has painted—in the form of a fictitious self-portrait—the most faithful portrait of Sartre. The impersonation, it seems to me, is a total success. It is the voice of Sartre

that we hear from start to finish. Burnier has composed a cruel and tender anthology of Sartre's political prognostications and recantations. And how many times the philosopher of *engagement* admitted to having been systematically mistaken! He was not a man of action, but, oh, how he would have loved to be one! Thanks to Burnier we can retrace the stages of his life, with all its wealth of contradictions.

In 1933 the great friend of his younger days, Raymond Aron, introduced him to the philosophy of phenomenology. In order to broaden his knowledge, Sartre went to spend an academic year in Berlin. Hitler was already in power; Sartre paid him no attention: he was absorbed in metaphysics. Then it was back to Paris, *le Front populaire*, the Civil War in Spain and then World War II. As a prisoner of the Germans, Sartre taught the philosophy of Heidegger to imprisoned parish priests. When the condition of his bad eye caused him to be sent back to France, he and Maurice Merleau-Ponty tried to organise a Resistance group; it was soon disbanded for incompetence. Sartre fell back on literature. He was to be blamed for having allowed his play *Les Mouches* (*The Flies*) to be performed in Paris while André Malraux was fighting at the head of the Alsace-Lorraine Brigade. Why? "Certainly not from cowardice. In spite of my slight build, I always had physical courage." That is true. What he lacked, despite all his numerous political proclamations, was the gift for collective action. Yet after the War, with the help of Simone de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, and Raymond Aron, he founded the militant review *Les Temps Modernes*, which came out in favour of *une troisième voie*, "a third way between Stalinist communism and the betrayals of social democracy, and of the world peace which was threatened by the big power blocs. . . ." It was now that Sartre was suddenly overtaken by fame. Quite unintentionally, his thinking caught the imagination of the time. Paris was agog with *existentialisme*—"a bad label which I ended by accepting."

"The cellars of St Germain des Prés, Juliette Greco, the *Tabou*, the *Rose Rouge*, the suicides, it was all on my account. You can imagine my discomfort. . . . Some wicked tongues said: We've had the *Dada* movement, and now we've got the *Caca*. . . ."

As for the Communists, they frowned on Sartre because existentialism was turning people away from Marxism.

Soon *la guerre froide* summoned Sartre to make his choice: the USSR or the United States. Raymond Aron had no hesitation in lining up with the Americans. Arthur Koestler explained to Sartre that the USSR was the arch-enemy of the peoples of the world, and that from now on in the Cold War he would be siding with the anti-communist stance of de Gaulle. "*Ses phrases glissaient sur moi sans m'atteindre* (His words slid by without reaching me)." In Sartre's view, Koestler's rejection of communism disqualified his arguments in advance. The break had come between anti- and pro-communism. Not that the Communists therefore accepted Sartre—one of his former pupils, Jean Kanapa, accused him of being "a fascist." Roger Garaudy, Henri Lefebvre, Pierre Hervé and Jean Toussaint Dessanti made violent attacks on him. Moscow called him a "*hyène dactylographe*." "These incessant polemics wounded me to the heart. . . ." Despite the frenzy of intolerance displayed by the Communist Party (or, perhaps, because of it)

¹ Michel-Antoine Burnier, *Le Testament de Sartre* (Editions Olivier Orban).

Sartre always felt more attracted towards communism, which “embodied history on the march (*incarnait l'histoire en marche*).” So it was that he became the very prototype of the intellectual masochist, predisposed towards fellow-travelling.

THEN CAME “THE THUNDERBOLT . . . by means of irrefutable documents we learned of the existence of actual concentration camps in the Soviet Union.” Recovering from their first consternation, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty declared that “we should judge communism by its intentions and not by its actions.” “Ten or fifteen million deportees did not open my eyes”, Sartre was to say later, when the time came to confess to illusions and delusions, to own up. In 1952 he was still denouncing “bacteriological warfare” in Korea. “They manipulated me from A to Z”, he was later to admit. But why did he always allow himself to be manipulated? “The USSR wants peace; it proves that every day”, he wrote. The Communists finally caught on to the advantages they could derive from this illustrious innocent, *ce naïf au grand prestige*. They invited him to the World Peace Congress in Vienna, and brought him to Moscow. Following that visit, Sartre wrote in 1954: “There is total freedom to criticise in the USSR.” It was Ilya Ehrenburg who told him so. The Soviet writer subsequently confided (to Astier de la Vigerie) that he was forced to talk nonsense to Sartre because the KGB had him under continual surveillance: “*Je pensais sincèrement Sartre assez averti pour comprendre ma comédie et qu'il ne me croirait pas. Le con.* (I honestly thought that Sartre was smart enough to understand my play-acting and that he wouldn't believe me. Bloody fool!).”

Sartre was stunned by the events of 1956. “It was my ideas

that were falling beneath the Russian bullets. The [Soviet] intervention was a crime.”

Disillusioned with the USSR and with the Communist Party, there was only one battle which Sartre did not regret: the one he fought against France's war in Algeria. “For once history proved me right.” But it was on the occasion of a first visit to the post-Batista Cuba in 1960 that he believed he had found the ideal revolution. He spent three days with Fidel Castro, travelling all over the island, and said in a blaze of enthusiasm: “He is the island, the people, the livestock, the plants and the land, all at once.” Twenty years later he came to see Cuba differently—“a crumbling economy, poverty, the crushing police of a single Party, and total dependence on the USSR.” But meanwhile he had fallen in love with the “Cultural Revolution” in Mao's China.

May 1968 in France took him by surprise: “What an upheaval of values!” Overcome with wonder and humility, he interviewed Daniel Cohn-Bendit for the *Nouvel Observateur*. He enthused and applauded, but he kept his distance—“I was too old to take part.” Sartre then made “the great discovery that the French Communists were afraid of revolution.” They had been schooled by Stalinism into not daring to take power. “*Une nouvelle extrême—gauche est née: avec délice j'épousais leur cause* (A new Far Left was born: I embraced its cause with delight).” It was the final act of Sartre's active life. He agreed to run the journal of the most extremist group, *la gauche prolétarienne*, and became particularly involved with the young extremist leader Benny Lévy, in whom he saw “a new type of intellectual.” They were co-authors of a book called *On a raison de se révolter*. In 1972, the majority of *la gauche prolétarienne* chose to break up rather than go over to terrorism in the violent manner of the Red Brigades. To give Sartre his due, he had some influence on this decision. The revolutionaries went back to their books. Sartre gave a few more interviews, came out on behalf of the refugees from Viet Nam (shaking hands again with Raymond Aron at the Paris public meeting for “the boat people”),² and then fell silent.

² See François Fejtő, “Raymond Aron and Jean-Paul Sartre: An Historic Handshake”, *ENCOUNTER*, October 1979.

Widow Music

Here ebony on ivory dictates
A style for winter, where a widow's hands
Tell through the keys how love debilitates—

Ice-chimes recall a limousine cortège,
Black bonnets crested with an icy surf,
The lancing coolness of a husband's flesh,

This almost-nothingness of mind, the slow
White days like pages read again, again,
The pool iced-over, deckchairs furred with snow. . . .

James Lasdun

Politics & World Affairs

. . . and the Same Old Problems

Thatcherism & Beyond—By SAMUEL BRITTAN



LENIN is supposed to have said: "He who is not for us is against us." With Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, it is the other way round: "He who is not against her, unreservedly heart and soul, is really for her . . ."; and this, it would seem, is the view of much of the intelligentsia, the media, and a wide range of people, ranging from polytechnic graduates to the "old" land-owning Tory supporters.

It is all somewhat disconcerting to those of us who have never been Conservatives, and who are indeed critical of a good deal of present British Government policy (or lack of policy), but who find much of the prevalent knee-jerk anti-Thatcherism based on the wrong criticisms of the wrong issues and rooted in a Bourbon-like refusal to learn from past mistakes.

There is also a persistent unwillingness among Mrs Thatcher's critics (and some of her admirers too) to see how similar British economic policies are to those to which other Western European governments (whether called Conservative as in Germany or "Socialist" as in France) have found their way. Everywhere, governments are following "sound money", trying to reduce Budget deficits and to close down loss-making coal-mines, steel-mills, and other enterprises. Everywhere, too, some relief is sought from the strain of these adjustments by protectionist barriers against Third World and Japanese products (e.g. textiles, cars, electronics) or by levying the consumer to protect the farmer and land-owner.

There is nothing in the record to suggest that the Thatcher Government has gone further than others in its pursuit of sound money or its attempts to limit public spending. The one contrary example is the denationalisation programme known as "privatisation." Indeed, state aid for lame ducks has continued apace. The British Government has not disengaged

from British Leyland, Rolls Royce, or any other troublesome concern. At the height of the coal strike, the Prime Minister boasted of £1.3 billion per annum "support" (an inextricable mixture of subsidy and "investment") for the Coal Board, and "buying British" is an official policy.

Nor has there been anything to suggest a counter-revolution against the Welfare State. As Jock Bruce-Gardyne freely admits in his admirably candid analysis of the record,¹ Government spending and the tax burden are now both higher as a proportion of the national income than in 1979 when Mrs Thatcher took office. Moreover, Welfare spending, other than unemployment pay, has shared in this increase. Even with the most successful attempts to impose a real ceiling from now on (and the best of luck with economic growth), the Government does not expect to get these percentages all the way down to the 1979 levels after two terms of office.

Why then the anti-Thatcher hysteria, exemplified by the Oxford vote against giving her an honorary degree? Why have level-headed people placed Margaret Thatcher on a par with a supporter of violent extra-parliamentary methods such as Arthur Scargill? How could so-called liberal journalists and Anglican bishops hesitate for one moment about supporting the legitimate government against attempts to remove it by brute force? Especially when the attempts included the most odious intimidation of workers and trade-unionists by gangs reminiscent of Mussolini's private armies.

A partial answer to these conundrums is simply British snobbery. Jock Bruce-Gardyne remarks how soon Mrs Thatcher became an object of derision "in the better class of political dining-room." Members of her Shadow Cabinet when in Opposition "indulged in analyses of her character as the port was circulating which occasionally induced the bystander to wonder why they agreed to serve under her leadership. . . ." (No prizes for answering that question.)

A slightly more rational ground for passionate opposition is the thought: "What would she really like to do if she had full power?" But a little reflection should show the absurdity of using this yardstick for a very practically-minded politician. For the fact is that no peace-time Prime Minister can, heaven be praised, be a dictator; and, whatever Mrs Thatcher may say in a relaxed mood to her confidants, she does not *know* what she would do in extremely unlikely hypothetical circumstances. Because the slightest mention of anything like

¹ *Mrs Thatcher's First Administration: The Prophets Confounded.* By JOCK BRUCE-GARDYNE. Macmillan, £20.00, paper £7.95.

the "privatisation" of health, education, or pensions is greeted with cries of horror—not least from Conservative election managers—there has been no serious debate on them in which the Prime Minister has been able to take a free part. (A serious inquiry would quite likely lead to different conclusions in each of these three areas.)

Although the main emphasis of Bruce-Gardyne's account of Mrs Thatcher's first administration is on the detailed conduct of economic policy, his book is by no means exclusively confined to this area. Some of the best critical vignettes are on the Foreign Office and its political spokesmen: Bruce-Gardyne aptly recalls Lord Soames berating the folly of those who opposed a Mugabe victory in Zimbabwe, at the same time as civil war was raging in that country and Mugabe's rival Joshua Nkomo had taken refuge in London. . . .

As for the Falklands War, Bruce-Gardyne gives due weight to its key role in consolidating Margaret Thatcher's position, without exaggerating the intrinsic importance of the issue. Although it became not the done thing to refer to the War overtly after 1982, it had a more lasting effect on the public interpretation of Government actions. What had previously seemed obstinacy became determination. Refusal to solve everyone's problems, which had earlier been castigated as callous, became "resolute national leadership." I do not think many people were really deceived before or after. The lady's attributes were fully apparent from the beginning; but, after the Falklands, appreciation gained the edge over condemnation for enough people to ensure a Tory victory in 1983.

The main fault of the book is that in the narrative chapters which precede his evaluation, the author leans so far backwards to be objective that we have an impression of one event succeeding another without any very clear pattern of cause-and-effect. It would have helped, too, to have included a calendar of events and a few charts of current variables such as sterling, unemployment, and inflation.

It is, however, a merit of the book that Bruce-Gardyne looks at other Ministers and advisers and does not pretend that all policies come fully-fledged from Mrs Thatcher like Athene from the brow of Zeus, although the author usually prefers to relate behaviour rather than describe personalities. (The main exception, interestingly enough, is Michael Foot who, though a wrong choice for Labour leader, is described as "cultivated, witty and generous of spirit", epithets which surely apply to the author himself.)

Mrs Thatcher's First Administration also contains fascinating accounts of the Prime Minister's personal methods. John Fforde, the No. Three at the Bank of England, was said to have "aged several years" in a few hours when standing in for the Governor at a meeting with Mrs Thatcher! No doubt her onslaught was formidable; but a person in that position ought to be able to stand up to an emission of sound-waves from someone who had no physical, financial, or career power over her victim, as was the case with Mr Fforde. In general Bruce-Gardyne quotes chapter and verse to show

that she was quite prepared to promote Civil Servants who did *not* share her priorities—provided they had "the ability to stand up to trenchant criticism and cross-questioning and to return the fire" (or, perhaps, in the case of Sir Robert Armstrong, the Cabinet Secretary, to deflect it).

In any case, no one reading *Mrs Thatcher's First Administration* will have any excuse for identifying the Premier's policies and ideas with "Free-Market economics."

THE DIFFERENCES are at their clearest in overseas economic policy. The British Government based its so-called "tough" EEC stance on a nationalist demand for budgetary rebate rather than on fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. This, in Lord Bruce-Gardyne's view, was also a consequence of the inveterate Foreign Office habit of lining up with Germans and their high-cost weekend-farmers rather than with the French. Nothing has been done to lance the purely domestic element in farm protection; and agricultural derating is sacred. The Thatcher Government, like its Callaghan predecessor, has been in the forefront of European plans to limit imports from the Third World and Japan, and inside the EEC is a foremost supporter of the steel cartel.

At home, tax exemption of mortgage interest, which has pernicious effects on everything from housing policy and mobility of labour to interest rates and monetary policy, enjoys the enthusiastic support of the Prime Minister—who will never allow her flirtation with classical economics to triumph over her political instincts.

The single most popular Thatcherite domestic policy—and the one most likely to be copied by the Opposition parties—has been the sale of the publicly-owned "council houses." Yet this is not something that free-market economists trumpet from the house-tops—the more astringent of them because of the discount at which the houses are sold, and the more sensible of them because they regard it as an inferior alternative to (and perhaps a step away from) recreating a market in rented accommodation.

Mrs Thatcher has undoubtedly succeeded in getting across the hard message. "The world does not owe us a living." But with the emphasis on "*us*"—the people of Britain—it does not mean quite the same as the economist's famous dictum: "There is no such thing as a free lunch." The latter is a universal statement, which would be true if there were a world government or if we were still living in tribes. The former is rooted in national pride or (as the Prime Minister would say) patriotism.

Mrs Thatcher has sometimes had to lean on classical political economists from Adam Smith to Friedrich von Hayek to rationalise her position, but her own utterances are quite different in spirit. The message of classical economics is best captured by a quotation not from an economist but from the philosopher Bertrand Russell, who declared that the world would be a paradise if people followed self-interest.² The remark accurately summarises the policy outlook of the classical economic school—a conscious attempt to take the moralism out of the decisions of businessmen, workers and

² Bertrand Russell, *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* (1954).

investors (on the higher moral ground that the world would be a better place with less self-conscious moralism).

But this is not how Mrs Thatcher thinks. She believes that the most moral course is for people to take responsibility for themselves *and their families* (the latter a concept only integrated with great difficulty into mainstream market economics), and that it is immoral for them to rely upon "other people" or for the State to look after them. For all the Prime Minister's citations of Hayek, there has not been yet a real "Thatcherite" economic philosopher.

THE LARGE DEPARTURES from market principles in international economics, the highly cost-ineffective recapture of the Falklands, and the appeal to self-help come together in a form of middle-class nationalism far removed from the economic doctrines which are praised or condemned in most debates on "the British experiment." There is no denying an overlap between market principles and Thatcherism; but the basic ideas, unlike the overlap, have not found their expositor. Political leaders are hardly ever good theorists of what they are trying to do. Mrs Thatcher's inconsistent attitudes (for instance, to money supply control, interest rates, and mortgage interest relief) show how wrong it is to link her with any pure economic school. Her instruction, in a "humorous" personal intervention in the *Yes, Minister* programme, to "get rid of all government economists" was revealing.

But note that Margaret Thatcher's nationalism is of a highly moralistic nature, far removed from the *realpolitik* beloved of the traditional political and diplomatic classes who make foreign policy their vocation. "Old School Tories" like Peregrine Worsthorne were horrified when the Prime Minister refused to back the US invasion of Grenada. "Of course we have to talk about aggression and the rule of law and self-determination in bashing the Argentinians over the Falklands", such writers seemed to say. "But that woman really believes all that nonsense, instead of realising that it is a necessary rationale for the *raison d'état* which should be the sole determinant of foreign policy." Still, speaking as someone who opposed the Falklands War on the ultimate grounds that the gains were not worth the suffering and costs, I found that the moral-legal emphasis was a mitigation, not an aggravation, of Mrs Thatcher's attitude.

The main intellectual critique of Thatcherism has unfortunately been on the much narrower issue of supposedly "dogmatic monetarism" which is allegedly responsible for over three million unemployed. Lord Bruce-Gardyne (as a financial journalist, and former Economic Secretary to the Treasury up to the last election) sheds some much-needed daylight on this mythology. So far from money-supply targets being followed dogmatically, they were frequently exceeded, revised upwards, and redefined. (He is unhappy about these departures, too much so in my view.) Even the supposedly perverse 1981 Budget, which raised taxes to reduce the Budget deficit just after the bottom of the recession, has parallels in the record of Denis Healey; and Bruce-Gardyne produces quotations from the last Labour Chancellor which

Recently published

MARXIAN UTOPIA?

by **NEVEN SESARDIĆ**
University of Zagreb

and **DOMENICO SETTEMBRINI**
University of Pisa

with a Preface by Lord Chapple

*"Sesardić (provides) a devastating
critique of Marxism."*

*Roger Scruton,
The Times*

*"I have never seen the point set out so
clearly and effectively as Settembrini's
account of why Marxism succeeded
when all other Socialist Utopias failed."*

Nora Beloff

80 pages £4.00 (inc. p&p)
ISBN 0 948027 01 0

MARKET OR PLAN?

Contrasting assessments of central
planning in Eastern Europe

An exposition of the case
for the market
by **MILTON FRIEDMAN**

with a critical comment
by **ALEC NOVE**

40 pages £2.50 (inc. p&p)
ISBN 0 948027 00 2

CRCE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH
INTO COMMUNIST ECONOMIES

2 LORD NORTH STREET LONDON SW1P 3LB

Details of the Centre's publications subscriptions service
available on request.

could as well have come from either Sir Geoffrey Howe or Nigel Lawson, his Thatcherite successors.

Bruce-Gardyne's overriding belief is that governments have much less influence over events than they suppose, and that what marginal influence they have is usually for the worse. His most strongly felt personal defence of the Thatcher Government is that it refrained from aggravating events. His book reveals how Thatcherism can be defended by a sceptical and undervalued Tory without the missionary zeal of the Prime Minister herself.

Although *Mrs Thatcher's First Administration* is avowedly a defence, Jock Bruce-Gardyne would be quite incapable of being sycophantic even if he tried (which is perhaps why far inferior people have had better political careers). He is eloquent on the folly of accepting in advance the Clegg Commission recommendations for buying off the public sector unions after James Callaghan's final "winter of discontent" in 1979. Less acceptable to many Radical Right economists (but no less valid) will be his strong criticism of the gratuitous 4% increase in the Retail Price Index owing to the near-doubling of VAT in 1979, at a time when the collapse of years of attempted pay policies was generating a wage explosion and when the second big oil price rise was in any case touching off highly inflationary expectations. He is nevertheless confident that the soaring pound of 1979-81, coupled with inherited wage pressure, would have damaged employment whatever had happened to VAT—and it is characteristic of his blunt honesty that he usually refers to that change as the decision to reduce the basic income-tax rate from 33 to 30% (which the VAT was partly designed to pay for) rather than as the VAT increase itself.

The high real exchange-rate of that period was the source of most of the economic failures and the successes of the Thatcher Administration. It was responsible for the rapid fall in inflation, which took the Government's critics and even the official forecaster by surprise. The resulting pressure on profit margins led to a blitz on overmanning and to a productivity spurt in industry. But as the exodus from manufacturing was not offset by more jobs elsewhere and the labour force grew, the pain took the form of high unemployment.

Lord Bruce-Gardyne sees the rise in sterling as a "portfolio movement" due largely to confidence in Britain as an oil producer at a time of worries about oil supplies, rather than as the result of tight money as such. With hindsight, it might have been desirable to provide the monetary targets with an explicit exchange-rate "override", as the very rapid fall in inflation was far from the "gradualist" intention of policy. (Indeed one of the sound points made against Friedmanite monetarism by the American economist W. W. Rostow is that gradualism hardly ever occurs. Inflation tends to rise and fall in lurches—but this does not make it any less of a monetary phenomenon.)

The American experience in Reagan's first term raises the

question whether the high real exchange rate could have been, not reversed as many industrialists wanted, but offset by domestic demand expansion via a higher Budget deficit. The French experience under François Mitterrand suggests that one moderate-to-small economy cannot get away with budgetary reflation on its own. There would therefore have had to be a concerted EEC (and Japanese) budgetary stimulus. We then have to ask whether it would have worked—or been offset by still higher real interest rates than we have had—if every major country tried simultaneous fiscal expansion. Even to discuss these puzzles shows an impatience with history. For until more time has passed, it will not be clear what the longer-term effects of budgetary stimulation have been, even in the US itself.

In Britain there has been no budgetary stimulation on the Reagan scale, but the pound has very clearly fallen, bringing to an end the over-valuation of sterling. Yet the 20% fall in manufacturing output in 1979-82 (or 25% since 1973) has not been reversed; and not all the fall is due to the displacement effect of North Sea oil. It looks as if a great deal of unprofitable capacity, formerly kept in being by cross-subsidisation and low profit margins, has been permanently eliminated.

SUPPORTERS of the Thatcher Government can point to an inflation rate lower than any since the mid-1960s and to a productivity improvement which has lasted longer than a mere recession shake-out. Against these credits are the massive debits of an increase in the number of unemployed from 1¼ to over 3 million. How then do we weigh up the record?

Mrs Thatcher's Keynesian critics shot themselves in the feet by not merely predicting high unemployment, on which they deservedly scored, but denying for good measure any prospect of economic recovery and expressing confident disbelief that inflation would ever fall back to low single figures. But although these mistakes need to be remembered, they do not themselves supply an evaluation.

In assessing the record, a more stable price level, although welcome, is best regarded as a condition for achieving other aims rather than as an objective in its own right. If we look at the more physical yardsticks of productivity and employment, neither is on its own a good indicator. Productivity alone ignores output and welfare losses from unemployment, while unemployment alone ignores the output of those still at work.

The fairest and least biased indicator is probably the overall national growth as measured by real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over a complete business cycle. The best heroic guess one can make (involving a still incomplete cycle) is that total output will have grown in the business cycle 1979-85 at a rate almost identical to the one at which it grew in the first post-Oil-Shock business cycle of 1973-79,³ when Heath, Wilson and Callaghan successively presided over our destiny. (Performance in both periods was, of course, far worse than in the pre-1973 period, which in retrospect looks like a Golden Age.)

On growth, therefore, the match seems to be a draw. But a

³ The Central Statistical Office publishes a more sophisticated measure of the real value of the GNP, which takes account of the terms of trade. This is somewhat more favourable to the Thatcher record; but it is hardly worth bringing in this complication, which relates to matters so clearly outside government influence.

draw is not good enough. If the growth of output is going to remain the same, it is surely better that it should take the form of slightly lower productivity and more jobs rather than the other way round. Moreover, a draw is not good enough to offset all the psychological *Angst* which I described at the outset.

A defence of the Thatcher record would have to be based on one or more of the following propositions, not all mutually exclusive.

1. That without the Thatcher counter-revolution the growth rate would not have remained stable but declined further—perhaps because any other government would have succumbed to the temptation to subsidise lame-duck industries even further, to increase protection, or depreciate the currency deliberately, which in the long run might have aggravated the problems of industrial decline.

2. That attempts to patch up the old Keynesian consensus would have involved increasing trade-union privileges to buy support for incomes policy, and more controls over pay and prices; and that the further politicisation of decisions (e.g. the introduction of measures of no intrinsic value to placate particular interest groups) and collectivisation of ever more aspects of life might *really* have taken us on the “road to serfdom”, despite numerous earlier false alarms.

3. That the Thatcher Years have provided the foundation of better economic performance, whether in reduced unemployment or faster growth, which will not be realised until the end of the 1980s (or even later). In the latter case, as Jock Bruce-Gardyne hints in his conclusions, the Thatcherite Conservatives will have taken us to the verge of the Promised Land, but another political group—he hopes the SDP/Liberal Alliance—will take us into it.

Defences Numbers 1 and 2 both involve counterfactuals, and Defence Number 3 a hypothetical statement about the future.

To my mind the most convincing defence is along the lines of the second counterfactual: the threat to freedom in trying to buttress the Keynesian approach by all manner of political controls and interventions, when it was otherwise falling apart. But this defence does not commit one to actual Conservative policy. It would be consistent with market-oriented policies which paid more attention to the distribution of income and wealth and which dispensed with the Prime Minister's own quasi-authoritarian “Victorian values” (not exhibited to any great extent by her more favoured Cabinet Ministers).

WHAT, THEN, ARE the free-market doctrines with which Thatcherism is inaccurately identified, and whose revival has caused so much disquiet among the writing and talking classes? The reader interested in the nature of these doctrines could do worse than read Geoffrey Sampson's *An End to Allegiance*.⁴

Sampson has the advantage of being a professor not of

⁴ *An End to Allegiance*. By GEOFFREY SAMPSON. Temple Smith, £12.50.

Making Sense of Marx

JON ELSTER

The first book in a new series which intends to exemplify a new paradigm in the study of Marxist social theory by examining the theory in the light of intervening history and with the tools of non-Marxist social science and philosophy. *Making Sense of Marx* is a systematic and critical examination of Marx's social theories offering a balanced account of his views that is at once sympathetic, undogmatic and rigorous.

Hard covers £32.50 net
Paperback £10.95 net

*Studies in Marxism
and Social Theory*

Capitalism and Social Democracy

ADAM PRZEWORSKI

A study of the choices faced by socialist movements as they developed within capitalist societies: whether to work through elections; whether to rely exclusively on the working class; and whether to try to reform or abolish capitalism. The author brings to his analysis a number of abstract models of political and economic structure.

About £20.00 net

*Studies in Marxism and Social Theory
(Forthcoming)*

The Politics of Socialism

An Essay in Political Theory

JOHN DUNN

John Dunn offers here an appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of socialism as a political theory, attempting to confront problems which have arisen largely from the practice of socialist politics itself and to locate their sources within the confusions and equivocations of existing understandings of socialism.

Hard covers £15.00 net
Paperback £4.95 net

Themes in the Social Sciences

After Marx

Edited by TERENCE BALL and JAMES FARR

A century after his death, Marx's ideas are still a potent political and intellectual force. This collection of essays develops some of the most important of the themes in his work.

Hard covers £22.50 net
Paperback £6.95 net

**Cambridge
University Press**

economics, but of linguistics, who follows free-market economics as a personal interest. Thus he combines the analytical ability to seek the key points with the detachment to avoid the nit-picking of professionals. Like Bruce-Gardyne, he is not afraid to be critical of his own side. Some of his pen-portraits of anarchist libertarians (whose existence has yet to be discovered by the Old Left), like New York's Murray Rothbard, will be treasured by those who have encountered the personalities involved. His demolition job on the Harvard philosopher Robert Nozick—the one member of the New Right to have received academic respectability for his writing in that capacity—who finds justification for property rights in historical entitlements going back to the dawn of time, is also a *tour de force*.

An End to Allegiance falls into two overlapping parts. The second and better part is an account of the various modern free-market writers, above all Hayek. (Strangely, it omits Schumpeter, who did much to develop the theory of entrepreneurship, but whose heresies deprive him of membership of the canon. For similar reasons, Mancur Olson, who has done more than anyone to expose the pernicious effects of interest groups, tends to be omitted too.) Sampson's book will provide a good introduction for readers who want to avoid purely economists' arguments, but who equally object to over-simplification and baby-talk.

The earlier part of the book is about the "tyrannical aspects" of the existing Welfare State and modern life generally. A great deal of space is devoted to the iniquities of the architectural and medical professions, and I sympathise with much of what he says. But how far are these iniquities really due to "collectivist policies" and how far to deeper tendencies which would work themselves out in any system? After all, American medicine is largely private enterprise, and many of the "concrete jungle" city and suburban developments have been market-commercial. Even Sampson's horror stories about the "welfare services" make me wonder whether these abuses, however endemic, constitute a case against having them altogether. But perhaps Professor Sampson has had more experience than I have had of the sharp end of the Welfare State—some of his tales are pretty horrific. Those of us leading a more sheltered existence have tended to play safe and rest our case about "the road to serfdom" on the ultimate consequences of certain high-level governmental policies, not least the incomes policies once again brought out of the cupboard by Walt Rostow.

Before leaving Sampson, I must take him to task on his one serious quarrel with Hayek—over Hayek's support for a very basic minimum-income guarantee. Sampson does not seem to me either inhumane or obtuse; but he is drawn to this perverse position (I think) out of misplaced desire for logical consistency. As he knows better than most, consistency is a property of propositions and applies only very indirectly to political proposals, which need the more elusive property of coherence. When some apparent implication of a doctrine produces outrageous consequences, it is the doctrine that should be altered.

One does not have to accept or reject Geoffrey Sampson as a single package. It is possible to have a largely free-market private-enterprise economy, together with a good measure of concern for the distribution of income and of property rights. It might be called "Thatcherism with a human face" if Mrs Thatcher were as free-market as her critics suppose, or it might also be identified with Dr David Owen's "social market economy" if that could be shorn of its Fabian remnants.

IF GEOFFREY SAMPSON'S BOOK introduces the ideas of the free-market counter-revolutionaries, W. W. Rostow's represents the backlash of the US liberal establishment against that revolution. In style they could not be more different. Sampson represents the literate ordinary citizen who has sensed the not-so-very-liberal side of that establishment. Rostow is a well-known economic historian, has also served in the Kennedy-Johnson administrations, and writes for "the layman" (his book is nevertheless full of charts and tables which will be helpful even to those who most disagree with him).

Although furnished with a special introduction to the British edition, *The Barbaric Counter-Revolution*⁵ was originally written as a tract against the Reagan Administration and also against the "practical monetarism" which the US Federal Reserve has been pursuing under Paul Volcker for a longer period. Rostow has been unlucky in timing. As he explains, his book was conceived on 15 December 1982, when the published American recession statistics were at their lowest point and unemployment at a post-War high. This undoubtedly reflected in part the counter-inflationary efforts of the Fed, which owing to technical miscalculations led (as did different events in the UK) to a short, sharp and successful attack on rising prices rather than the gradual reduction that had been intended.

Since then the US has had an economic recovery which has been the envy of the world, and which has included a rapid fall in unemployment. Indeed many of the same anti-Thatcherite British commentators who will be first to praise Rostow for his general theme are also the first to indulge in tongue-in-cheek praise for President Reagan's economic record, especially his indulgence in "deficit financing."

Rostow himself favours a "new industrial policy." The case he makes for supporting declining industries is half-heartedly party-line. His real enthusiasm is for identifying and backing the winners in the new technologies; and he concedes that the main steam must come from private enterprise acting under the profit motive. The most serious part of his programme is the emphasis on links between the research universities and the business community. In his British introduction, he is less pessimistic than he was in the original American edition about his own country, which is (even under Reagan) "responding on a continental scale to the challenges and possibilities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution."

In contrast to many other writers on the new technology, Rostow thinks it probable that we are riding on a wave of new investment. But how does it help to call that a "fourth Kondrakeff"? These supposed 50- or 60-year cycles are so

⁵ *The Barbaric Counter-Revolution*. By W. W. ROSTOW. Macmillan, £17.50, paper £7.95.

badly defined that Rostow can argue that we are on a "Kondrakeff upswing" and others that we are on a "downswing." Leaving the formulation aside, Rostow makes an interesting distinction between the *microchip revolution*, which will probably create more jobs rather than fewer, and *robots* which threaten, not jobs, theoretically, but a severe reduction in the price of labour relative to capital. Rostow's aversion to price-mechanism methods prevents him from suggesting how to cope with what could, if handled wisely, be the most beneficial technological development in human history.

Rostow's analysis is worst on inflation, which he persists in seeing as a series of unexpected events raising particular prices (such as oil or commodities). He refuses to realise that inflation remains a monetary phenomenon for all the misleading quantification of the technical monetarists. Rostow's lack of feel for monetary matters makes him exaggerate the power of the US Fed over *real* interest rates. His rage against the 1982 recession has prevented him from seeing the relevance of his own analysis of the "new wave of investment" (together with financial liberalisation, low private saving, and tax breaks) to interest rates (which are high not merely on account of Fed policy or even because of the US Budget deficit).

It would nevertheless be a pity if Rostow's book were dismissed by those of a different outlook. (Indeed as I look at all these books on my desk the despairing thought strikes me that each will be read largely by those who already agree with it.) Rostow's title does not correctly convey his tone, which is interesting and informative whenever it deals with subjects such as technical innovation and long-term historical movements, which he has made his specialty. Still, as someone who was so intensely involved in the Viet Nam War, Rostow should have been more sparing of the adjective "barbaric."

Unlike many British Keynesians, he fully accepts that post-War methods of "spending ourselves into full employment" were seen to cease to work about the time of the 1973 Oil Shock, and were probably always flawed. As someone more at home with physical events and trends, he finds Keynesian and Monetarist methods equally suspect because of their concentration on financial policy at the expense of underlying problems.

Rostow believes that counter-inflationary policy should be a three-legged stool, including incomes policy as well as monetary and fiscal action. He is much too sanguine about the potentialities of a soft "incomes policy", without detailed wage-and-price controls; and he subscribes to the common fallacy that Western Germany has had such a policy. German actions correspond in fact much more closely to an orthodox counter-inflationary policy, backed up by exhaustive explanation and exhortation to ensure credibility—just the combination on which Rostow pours such scorn when it is proposed for the USA. (Moreover, Rostow was not to know that by the time of his book's publication Western Germany was to have a higher unemployment rate than the USA.)

Rostow makes the mistake of supposing that the purpose of incomes policy is to counter inflation—whereas its long-term role, if it has any, is to reduce unemployment by bringing wages nearer to market-clearing levels. Rostow, like many

Princeton

Knowing One's Enemies

Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars

Edited by Ernest R. May

Drawing on disclosures of the 1970s and on previously inaccessible archives, *Knowing One's Enemies* fills a void in modern diplomatic and strategic history by telling the story of intelligence agencies from the early nineteen-hundreds to World War II. In essays that illuminate not only the recent past, but also shortcomings in today's intelligence assessments, sixteen experts show how potential protagonists appraised each other prior to the World Wars. \$38.50 (U.S.)

On War

Indexed Edition

Carl von Clausewitz

Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret

Introductory Essays by Peter Paret, Michael Howard, and Bernard Brodie With a Commentary by Bernard Brodie
"Masterful English translation by Professors Howard and Paret. What makes *On War* so timely is that, unlike most military strategists and theoreticians, Clausewitz did not advocate war or recommend specific courses of action, but merely sought to describe war's character and dynamics. The importance of the book was enhanced by the post-Vietnam War discovery that since the beginning of the nuclear age, the United States has unwittingly fallen into the same logical errors Clausewitz so eloquently exposed."

—Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr.,
Harper's Magazine \$40.50 (U.S.)

Order from your local bookseller or

Princeton University Press

15A Epsom Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3JT

others of his generation, suffers from not having seriously thought through the difference between the transitional unemployment usually involved in moving to a lower inflation rate and the underlying long-term rate of unemployment consistent with any non-accelerating stable rate of inflation (the so-called NAIRU).

HAVING SAID THIS, I confess that there is a case to answer. In 1977, when I wrote (with Peter Lilley) *The Delusion of Incomes Policy*, we pointed out that unemployment had not performed better in the UK—which was in the throes of the Callaghan-Healey “social contract”—than it had in countries with “hands-off” attitudes. After the subsequent unemployment explosion this is no longer true. Britain’s monopolistic labour market has produced a flood of jobless. A more competitive US-style labour market might be the appropriate corrective, but the scale of the problem is such that second-best attempts to simulate market-clearing wages need to be looked at again—although always remembering that the price of trade-union support for such attempts is the strengthening of the monopolistic elements which are the source of the problem in the first place. My personal revisionism only goes as far as incomes policies *which do not require overt trade-union cooperation*.

READERS LOOKING FOR a promising unorthodox approach to restoring full employment within a capitalist market economy will find more food for thought in Martin Weitzman’s proposal for a new form of labour contract than in Rostow’s 1960s orthodoxy. Weitzman’s purpose is to make the labour market more like the “product market.”⁶

In the “product market” most sellers are eagerly seeking buyers, and it looks as if everyone could increase production if only there were the market. This is quite likely an illusion, because if all firms tried to produce more simultaneously, they might well not be able to. Nevertheless, at any moment each producer is trying to sell as much as he can.

The reason is that because of “economies of scale” the extra (or marginal) cost of producing each new unit is below the average cost. Any extra units that can be sold without reducing the price will add to profits. This state of affairs is known to economists as “monopolistic competition”; but the non-specialist will rightly regard it as characteristic of competition as such. The essence is that it is a buyer’s market where producers are eager to sell.

In the labour market, by contrast, there is no difference between the average cost of labour and the cost of the marginal worker. (Indeed, on more realistic assumptions than those of Weitzman, the marginal cost may be higher.) Weitzman’s suggestion is to transform the labour market into something more like the product market, in which the cost of

an additional worker would be less than the average cost-per-head of employing the existing labour force.

The suggestion is basically simple. Take a company where pay-per-worker is £180 per week and value-added-per-worker is £270—the difference covering overheads, depreciation, interest, profits, and so on. Weitzman would suggest changing the contract from a wage contract into a revenue-sharing one, where the worker receives two-thirds of the value added. On the day of the change-over the employee is no better off and no worse off than before. But whereas previously the company only took on an extra worker when total revenue from employing him came to £180, under the two-thirds sharing arrangement an extra worker will be taken on if the value added he produces is as little as £120, and subsequently for smaller and smaller amounts.

Thus more workers would be taken on, but at the expense of proportionally reducing remuneration per worker. For the full benefits of the system to be felt, most major companies would have to switch to the new system together, thereby increasing their combined demand for workers who would spend their pay-packets on each other’s products, thus reducing the size of the pay-cut required to price the unemployed into work.

A revenue-sharing system would respond very differently from the present one to “demand shocks.” If demand were reduced for counter-inflation or any other reasons, the strain would be taken by reducing prices rather than cutting payrolls: if demand were increased, more workers would be engaged with a much smaller inflationary effect. Weitzman points out that revenue-sharing, so far from being an exotic innovation, is already the norm among self-employed and professional partnerships as well as people who work on commission or who receive tips.

Some traditional agricultural systems are based on “share-cropping”—in which payment takes the form of a share of the value of the crop. Sliding scales (in which pay was related to product prices) were common in coal and steel around the turn of the century. In Japan a major fraction of pay comes not as of right, but through a profit-sharing bonus, whose potential reduction is a cushion against dismissals in recession. Profit-sharing schemes have the required effect, provided that they are genuinely profit-sharing and not employee stock-ownership plans. The key point is that workers’ pay should be directly and automatically adjusted by some index of corporate well-being (such as profit-per-worker or product-price).

If Weitzman makes it all too easy it is because of a blindness to power realities typical of much modern economics. It is not realistic to expect a typical worker earning £180 to agree to have all or a major part converted into a variable bonus, whose likely “downward variability” will be explained *ad nauseum* in the media if the Weitzman idea catches on. The profit bonus would have to seep in gradually, e.g. in partial substitution for extra pay-increases in a good year, or as an alternative to redundancies in a company on the rocks.

The Share Economy suffers from being so obviously a translation into readable prose of a mathematical model. The translation is easy to follow (at least for those with basic

⁶ *The Share Economy*. By MARTIN WEITZMAN. Harvard University Press, \$15.00, £12.00.

undergraduate economics). But one gets the feeling that the author is intellectually slumming. He is obviously impatient with questions outside his mathematical framework, such as why wage systems tended (with the exception of that in Japan very recently) to replace share systems as capitalism developed. Nor do we know what all the characteristics of his desired sellers' market for labour would really be. Most experience of such markets has been in periods of repressed inflation, which would not recur if a share economy were combined with sound monetary and fiscal policies. But there could be other kinds of snag—which, no doubt, the author would explain, after the event, with a further mathematical model and further suggested reforms.

Because all changes have unexpected consequences, it would be best to proceed with revenue-sharing on a gradualist company-by-company basis. But this very gradualism will exact a price. Weitzman mentions (although he does not stress it sufficiently) the opposition of existing workers to the dilution of their wages by extra hiring, which could be severe for any company introducing revenue-sharing. It would thus be most important for management to retain as much as possible of its traditional prerogatives. Thus *revenue-sharing* is a rival to *workers' cooperatives*, although both can coexist if they are introduced incrementally rather than systemically.

WEITZMAN'S PROPOSALS could still be the best on offer for changing the institutions of the old labour market to favour "pricing into work." His suggestions are more useful than,

say, tax-based incomes policies. They are less cumbersome and do not slow down dynamic adjustments of particular industries and firms. Their irritating aspect is the belief that power realities can be swept aside by mechanistic formulae. Weitzman concedes that the losers from his proposals will be the high-seniority workers, drawing a premium above market wages (thanks to trade-union monopoly). But these are precisely the people with the most influence on union policy, and those whose attitudes prevail even among people supposedly negotiating for employers. Thus, neither Weitzman's nor any alternative reforms would reduce the need for a direct attack on labour-monopoly power which will inevitably be stigmatised as "union-bashing." Alternative forms of ownership and wage-payment can usefully supplement laws and actions to reduce trade-union privilege, but they cannot serve as a substitute.

To his credit, Weitzman emphasises that the eventual equilibrium of his system would be no different in terms of pay, profits, output (and so on) to that of the present wage system, if wages were adjusted enough to the most recent shocks to allow equilibrium to be reached. The superiority he claims is in the speed and nature of adjustment to disturbances.

HOW THEN CAN WE AVOID the painful choice between depressed living standards for less skilled workers and mass unemployment? There is a way. For if every citizen had a substantial stake in the nation's capital

An uncompromising critique of liberal panaceas IDEALISM, REALISM AND THE MYTH OF APPEASEMENT

by Jeane Kirkpatrick

“The Blame America First Club looks less to history or reason than to its own sense of America's guilt. In reality, the United States does not cause all the world's problems, nor can it cure them simply by altering its own behaviour. Not all the dangers in the world exist in our heads alone, and few can be dealt with simply by reinterpreting the data of experience to suit our preferences. Murder does not depend upon the perception of the witness; conquest is not altered by redefinition. Neither Colonel Qaddafi nor the Ortega brothers can be controlled by the

alteration of our own behaviour. The appropriate preparations for dealing with them do not involve psychoanalysis but a strong defence.”

**Price including postage:
£3.00 (UK); £3.75 (overseas airmail)**

(Cheques and money orders should be in British or US currency).

Available from the Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies,
13-14 Golden Square, London W1R 3AG.
(Tel. 01-439 8719; Telex 893513 TOMEDE G)

INDEPENDENT AFRICA AND THE WORLD

Peter Calvocoressi

An important new book by a distinguished writer which takes a critical yet sympathetic look at Africa today and at its interaction with the rest of the world.

Published February £3.50 net
Paperback ISBN 0 582 29654 4 160 pp

Available from your bookshop

For more information please contact
Catherine Burrell,
Longman House, Burnt Mill,
Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE.

Longman 

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN GENTLEMAN IN POLITICS DAVID DUTTON

This is a major new political biography of a man whose career could have ended in 1922, when the Conservative party rejected his leadership and overthrew the Lloyd George coalition, but who went on to become a distinguished Foreign Secretary and European statesman and then the leading critic in the House of Commons of the policy of appeasing Hitler.

Chamberlain was noted for his loyalty but his correspondence contains some trenchant criticisms of several of his colleagues, particularly Baldwin ("self-centred, selfish and idle").

ISBN 0 86360 018 2 400pp Illustrated
14 March 1985 £14.95

On sale at bookshops in the U.K.

ROSS ANDERSON PUBLICATIONS LIMITED
Larkhill House, 160 St. Georges Road,
Bolton BL1 2PJ.

Telephone: 0204 31289.

assets, then we could take in our stride any shift of relative shares between capital and labour. All of us would enjoy the investment income, and the independence and security it brings. On the extreme assumption of "a Robot Age", it would turn that age into a utopia rather than a nightmare; and any unemployment would be voluntary, arising from the fact that some people with low-earning capacity might prefer to live entirely as gentlemen of leisure. Even on less extreme assumptions, mass share-ownership would still improve the distribution of wealth and give more people a stake in the fruits of capitalism.

How, then, can we make capitalists out of all the citizens? I have elsewhere suggested the handling over *gratis* of privatisation shares and the channelling of Government North Sea oil revenue to all citizens on a *pro rata* basis.⁷ These could be useful pilot projects, if only we had a government which combined attachment to market principles with an interest in the distribution of income and wealth.

Something more would be needed to spread ownership in the private sector proper, if the typical citizen were to have a worthwhile stake. One such idea has been provided by Stuart M. Speiser.⁸ Like many American popular writers, Mr Speiser claims a ridiculous amount for his proposal of "superstock." It would not only rid us of unemployment and inflation; it would allegedly dissolve the East-West rivalry, save us from nuclear catastrophe, help with women's rights, and provide a credo for religious communities.

Strip away all the gimmicky packaging and we are left with the germ of a good idea. Instead of reinvesting their profits, the largest corporations would have to hand over their earnings to stockholders. This is a proposal already advocated by F. A. Hayek and Milton Friedman to improve efficiency and reduce management-power relative to shareholder-power. If all new investment had to be financed by new issues of bonds or shares, it would be more subject to market tests.

Speiser differs from Hayek and Friedman; instead of tapping the conventional financial markets, corporations would have to allocate their new issues in equal portions to all citizens. Special "unit trusts" would put together the new shares in convenient parcels. Citizens would be granted bank loans to pay for their holdings, which would be frozen until the loans were repaid and as the new stocks gained in value. No scheme for allocating share capital *gratis* to the have-nots can avoid "watering" the capital of existing shareholders. But Speiser's watering is of the gentlest. There is no confiscation; and mass share-ownership relates to new capital, leaving ownership of existing assets unaffected.

Speiser underestimates the inflationary risks of the massive bank-loans necessary to implement the scheme. They could be kept in check, but quite likely at the expense of a general tight-money régime in other sectors. Might it not be simpler to avoid the bank loans (and the sharp distinction between new and old equipment) by requiring corporations to issue to

⁷ Samuel Brittan, "The Politics and Economics of Privatisation", *Political Quarterly* (April, 1984).

⁸ *How To End the Nuclear Nightmare*. By STUART M. SPEISER. North River Press (P.O. Box 241, Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y. 10520), \$8.95.

the new "unit trusts" a certain number of "free" shares per annum; but otherwise leave their activities alone? In other words, an overt and less cumbersome watering.

One or other variant will be necessary if we are to have a Property-Owning Democracy as anything other than a slogan. Mass share-ownership combines easily with the Weitzman revenue-sharing schemes, relating to the ownership of that part of the revenue not paid over directly to the workers.

FINALLY, HOW DOES THIS breathless survey of diverse ideas relate to "Thatcherism"? Quite directly.

The trouble with economic policies pursued by European Governments—most of which are "Thatcherite" without the name—is that they represent the reaction of the 1970s to the

mistakes of the 1960s. The trouble with most of their critics is that they simply want to put the clock back to the 1960s and return to "reflation", incomes policy, and yet higher public spending . . . as if nothing had happened. What is still missing is a policy attuned to the needs of the 1980s and '90s.

With hindsight it can be seen that both the Keynesian Revolution and the Monetarist Counter-Revolution were "dazzling digressions" from the main problem. The defect they both had in common was that they thought they could make a successful detour around the labour market—the market which was malfunctioning—by skilful adjustments of financial aggregates.

An attack on the high unemployment that has infested European capitalism will need to tackle it at its source—which is the wage system and the ownership of capital.

Eisenhower & After

US Conservatism since the 1950s—By ANTHONY HARTLEY



DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER has recently been described by Paul Johnson as the best American President of the 20th century. The addition of the name of Warren Harding in the same context might seem to make this a mixed compliment; nevertheless a favourable estimate of the Eisenhower presidency shows how much

things have changed since a combination of Castro, Sputnik and U-2 brought it to an apparently disastrous close. Eisenhower's biographer, Stephen E. Ambrose,¹ has few doubts:

"Eisenhower gave the nation eight years of peace and prosperity. No other President in the twentieth century could make that claim. No wonder that millions of Americans felt that the country was damned lucky to have him."

Sandwiched between a President on whom action was forced by circumstances (Truman) and one who valued action for its own sake (Kennedy), the Eisenhower years do indeed seem in retrospect a period of repose, a tranquil interlude between the Korean war and the moment when America was "got moving" in so determined a manner that it has hardly been still since.

Professor Ambrose has written a full and intensely

interesting biography which, like all good biographies, abounds in quotations from its subject. From these gradually emerges the character of Eisenhower: a man who, for all his experience as the Army's lobbyist on Capitol Hill, remained a soldier in politics, conservative in his views and, in many ways, alien to the wire-pulling and exercise of patronage which constitute the operative modes of American political life. When filling appointments in his Administration, he wrote in his diary:

"No one should be appointed to political office if he is a seeker after it."

From this conviction stemmed his preference for a Cabinet composed of successful businessmen—these at least would have to make financial sacrifices to serve their country. Were they to be excluded, he wrote, it would be impossible "to get anybody to take jobs in Washington except business failures, college professors [crossed out and replaced by "political hacks"], and New Deal lawyers."

The list is eloquent of Eisenhower's personal tastes. His chosen friends were a group of wealthy men ("the gang") with whom he tirelessly played golf and bridge, shot quail and white-wing doves, and who provided him with advice about investments and sheltered enclaves near good golf-courses for his holidays. In private life as in public, the President dominated his associates by his simple dignity and his moral authority. No doubt political life was made easier for him by his standing as a national hero, but, as Stephen Ambrose shows, Eisenhower's long experience of affairs, his capacity for administration, and a military ability to take decisions when required to do so enabled him to exert effective

¹ *Eisenhower The President 1952-1969*. By STEPHEN E. AMBROSE. Allen & Unwin, £15.00.

command over the government of the United States. The clarity of his directives and memoranda makes a welcome contrast with the papers of some of his successors. (Eisenhower came from a generation which still recorded decisions in literate English rather than relying on the broken sentences of tape-recordings.)

At home his Administration was marked by an attempt to halt the march to "big government" and a struggle to balance the budget after the extravagances of the Korean War. Eisenhower did not believe in an ever-expanding Federal government, though in some instances (the construction of interstate highways, for instance) he was ready enough to use Federal money. But his major efforts at economy were aimed at the increasing demands of the Department of Defense, aided and abetted by Congress. Eisenhower's military experience had left him with little belief in the cost-effectiveness of military procurement, and he viewed with scepticism the flood of demands for new generations of weapons which issued ceaselessly from the Pentagon. His much-quoted and much-misunderstood remarks in his farewell address to the American people about "the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex" referred to the process by which the military, the manufacturers, and the politicians in Congress united to force the hand of the Executive and plunder the United States Budget. His military experience and innate common sense allowed him to remain calm in the face of "the missile gap" and "the Soviet threat." His attempts, frustrated by the erratic behaviour of Khrushchev and the U-2 episode, to arrive at arms-control agreements with the Russians in the last two years of his Administration were the natural consequence of this moderation.

YET EISENHOWER REMAINED a conservative. His attitude towards racial discrimination, for instance, infuriated liberals. For though he was willing to enforce the law at Little Rock, he was also convinced that integration in schools or elsewhere could not be achieved by simple judicial decision and that to move too fast in matters affecting people's feelings would arouse unpredictable reactions in the South. During his presidency the Executive branch of the United States Government enforced the law, but it did little to extend it or to invite its application. Nor did Eisenhower give more satisfaction to liberals in his attitude towards Joseph McCarthy. Privately detesting the junior Senator from Wisconsin, in public he adopted a policy of ignoring him. No doubt he did not wish to split the Republican Party on this issue, and in the event his unheroic stance was justified. McCarthy destroyed himself; significantly Eisenhower's contribution to the result was his refusal to allow Federal employees to testify before the Senator's committee—a step taken in defence of what he conceived as the necessary privileges of the American Presidency in the 20th century. In his conception of institutions as subject to gradual change and his refusal to go beyond obedience to the law in an endeavour to hasten the achievement of social ends, there is something Burkean.

THE SAME MODERATION manifested itself in the foreign policy of the Eisenhower Administration—an area fully controlled by the President despite the impressively knowledgeable presence of John Foster Dulles at the State Department. In his dealings with China over the Quemoy and Matsu crisis, in his refusal to involve the United States in direct support of France in Viet Nam, Eisenhower resisted the advice of some of his closest associates and of the Chiefs-of-Staff who, on various occasions, proposed the use of atomic weapons in the Far East.

In fact, the years 1952-60 saw the continuation of a pattern which had already been set by the Truman Administration. The success enjoyed by the United States during the post-War years in dealing with its European allies and the means by which this had been accomplished—economic aid plus military alliance—seemed to provide a formula which could be applied to other areas. In the 1950s not only was German rearmament achieved through the signature of the Treaty of Paris, but the United States entered into aid and defence commitments with Korea, Taiwan, and those nations belonging to the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO). Other agreements already existed with Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines. In the Middle East the United States encouraged (but did not join) the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) until its collapse after the Iraqi *coup d'état* of 1958. Eisenhower had been deeply involved in the success of America's European commitment, and it was natural that he should see in the continuation and expansion of this pattern a solution for the regional dilemmas of American foreign policy.

However, the spread of a network of alliances across the world had the disadvantage of imposing heavier and heavier burdens on the United States. Moreover, the European example was misleading. Neither South-east Asia nor the Middle East were likely to respond to the treatment that had worked so well in Western Europe. Nor did they. The withdrawal of France and Britain from regions where they had exercised imperial influence left the United States alone face to face with the problems of those areas. The most obvious instance of this is the American commitment to the government of Ngo Dinh Diem after France's abandonment of South Viet Nam, but the Middle East provides an even more significant example.

Within two years of the Suez crisis which marked the elimination of British and French influence in the Middle East, Eisenhower was led to promulgate "the Eisenhower doctrine." This announced that aid would be given, and American forces used "to secure and protect the territorial integrity of such Middle Eastern nations requesting such aid against overt aggression from any nation controlled by international Communism." This statement, though apparently directed against Communism, was in reality aimed at the activities of Egypt's President Nasser. As Professor Ambrose puts it: "What Eisenhower really feared was radical Arab nationalism" and his statement expressed America's "determination to use force to prevent the domination of the area by anti-Western pan-Arab nationalism." In other words, America's "anti-colonialist" policies had brought about a situation where the United States had to put itself forward

as the power responsible for the maintenance of order and the *status quo* in a part of the world which it understood insufficiently and where the cards were stacked against it by the sympathy enjoyed by Israel among large sections of American public opinion. "The Eisenhower doctrine" was an (admittedly pale) precursor of the activism of the Kennedy Administration. As such it was a distinct departure from the more cautious attitude adopted by the President in the Far East.

CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, this aspect of the withdrawal of the old imperial powers from their overseas spheres of influence goes unmentioned in Richard J. Barnet's book on the relationship between the United States and its allies,² though its relevance to this theme is obvious. While leaving aside "the Eisenhower doctrine" and its significance, Mr Barnet catalogues the misunderstandings between America and its partners which have occurred from Truman to Reagan. The list is a long one, no doubt owing as much to European unwillingness to undertake exertions in their own defence as to American indecision and shifts of policy brought about by purely domestic factors. Any American administration—and this was true of Eisenhower's—finds itself with little room for manoeuvre between the apprehensions of its allies and its need to conduct bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union. In Europe a "hard" American line brings in its wake accusations of aggressive intentions; a "soft" approach arouses the fear of abandonment.

The difficulty for any American administration in deciding on the line to be taken in any discussion with the Soviet Union does not stem solely from the need to reassure allies. There is also the problem of what the Soviet Union is, what it can be expected to do, and how the United States should define its own attitude towards this phenomenon. In a perceptive essay on "the cold war", Ernest R. May has written:

"Truman and Eisenhower both wanted to define the Soviet problem primarily in political and economic terms. Neither succeeded. A combination of forces, some from within their own administrations, some from outside, compelled them to accept definitions couched much more in military terms."³

The result of this failure to find an acceptable political stance in face of the Russian *machtstaat* has been the primacy of arms control in any dialogue between the two countries. However, arms control or even disarmament must be considered, in any logical approach to international affairs, as the consequence, rather than the cause, of a relaxation of international tension. Despite this fact, both deterrence and *détente*—opposite sides of the same coin—are still measured

² *Allies: America, Europe and Japan since the War*. By RICHARD J. BARNET. Jonathan Cape, £16.00.

³ In *The Making of America's Soviet Policy*. Edited by JOSEPH S. NYE, JR. Yale University Press, £24.50, \$24.50.

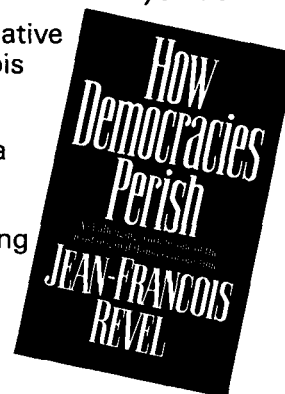
How Democracies Perish

JEAN-FRANCOIS REVEL

"As a report from the intellectual front line, this can hardly fail to create explosions." *David Pryce Jones*

In his latest provocative work, Jean-Francois Revel argues passionately that "detente was not a dream, but a trap" and that the West has become a willing victim of Soviet imperialism and atrocity.

£12.95



Helmut Schmidt

Helmsman of Germany
JONATHAN CARR

The first full-length biography of Helmut Schmidt, one of the most widely admired and least understood of post-war leaders.

"Jonathan Carr's excellent, concise biography" *Economist*

"a model of clarity, precision, balance and thought" *Sunday Times*

£12.95

Germany Today

A Personal Report
WALTER LAQUEUR

Walter Laqueur, the distinguished political scientist, analyses the age-long *Angst* of Germany and the issues which divide it today.

"It is high time we had an up-to-date assessment of what is going on.

Germany Today goes a long way in explaining the confusing scene."

Sunday Times

£12.95

Weidenfeld & Nicolson

in terms of the possession of military hardware and the frequency of underground testing of nuclear devices. Any true *détente* would be accompanied by agreements on specific political subjects of contention and also by some abatement of ideological rigidity on the Russian, and moral fervour on the American, side. These would be the signs that a real—and not merely tactical—improvement in East-West relations was under way.

Such developments may have to await a new generation of Russian leadership. Meanwhile, the formal dance of arms negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union will continue and is, no doubt, better than nothing. But it is in the nature of things that agreements reached in this area are highly unstable, depending as they do upon a halt in the development of technology, when it is the reverse that is now taking place.

Eisenhower did not get far in his attempt to bring Khrushchev to the negotiating table. Proposals for a Test-Ban Treaty or for an “open skies” system of monitoring military movements were lost in the row created by the shooting-down of an American U-2 plane over Russian territory. If Khrushchev wanted any kind of talks with the United States—and he seems to have felt himself to be in a weak position in 1960—then he may have wished to delay the encounter until he could deal with Eisenhower’s successor. In any case, he could hardly let the U-2 incident pass; the alternative was to try to turn it to advantage.

The summit of June 1960 meant the end of Eisenhower’s plan for an arms control treaty with the Soviet Union. In-

deed, despite Professor Ambrose’s very natural attempt to make the best of things, it cannot be said that Eisenhower’s second term as President was particularly fortunate in foreign affairs. Not only did “the Eisenhower doctrine” imply a new definition of American overseas commitments, but the rise of Fidel Castro faced the Administration with a problem which it could neither neglect nor resolve. On the Guatemalan model, training camps for Cuban exiles were established by the Central Intelligence Agency, but nobody had much idea of what to do with these para-military formations. Eisenhower had asked, “Where’s our government-in-exile?”—but no satisfactory answer was forthcoming. It was left for President Kennedy at the Bay of Pigs to set this machinery into disastrous motion, initiating a sequence of events which led to the Cuban missile crisis and to the problems faced today by the United States in Central America and around the Caribbean, but it is hard not to draw the conclusion that some of the responsibility for this rests with the Eisenhower Administration’s inability to make up its mind about what it thought of Castro. After a heart attack and a stroke the President was not the man he had been at the beginning of his two terms of office.

AT THE BEGINNING of this review I described Eisenhower as “a conservative.” Yet if his Presidency is compared with that of Ronald Reagan, it becomes apparent that the definition of American conservatism has changed since the 1950s. Eisenhower may have been against “big government”, but he made no move towards cutting social services and positively approved the idea of free medical aid. He tried to restrict military expenditure and would hardly have favoured the “Star Wars” option. Nor was he faced with the moral controversies which seem to be the chosen battleground of the present “New Right” in America.

Of course, with an expanding world economy, an American President was in an easier position in the ‘50s than is the case now. The economic policies of the Reagan Administration and the reductions in taxes and deficitary budgeting are the result both of the experience of “stagflation” in the 1970s and of the citizen’s feeling, acquired over a number of years, that Federal spending on welfare was not producing the results expected of it. Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society” ended in a welter of projects, many of which—like, for instance, “Headstart”—were estimated by the General Accounting Office of the United States to have had no effect whatever. By 1980 Federal expenditure on “income support, social security and welfare” was running at 12.6% of the national income (as opposed to 7.3% for defence expenditure). Sooner or later the voter was bound to put these facts together, and Ronald Reagan was very ready to help him do so.⁴

⁴ On this topic see *Tyranny of the Status Quo*. By MILTON AND ROSE FRIEDMAN. Secker & Warburg, £8.50. This clearly written pamphlet explains why there should have been a revolt of the American taxpayer against “big government”—a revolt symbolised by the State of California’s adoption of Proposition Thirteen.

STERLING

A PLEA FOR MODERATION

An exhaustive and stimulating book that disputes monetarists' conventional theory, offering instead Jay's controversial but soundly argued economic solutions.

£15.00 Sidgwick & Jackson

DOUGLAS JAY

Similarly, in foreign policy the Reagan Administration's determination to expand America's capacity for defence was certainly a reaction to Russian behaviour during President Carter's term of office. Afghanistan, an apparent increase in Russian strength, and humiliation over the captivity of American hostages in Teheran have combined to produce a recovery in American public opinion from the post-Viet Nam depression of the 1970s. President Reagan's paternal firmness towards other countries is an expression of this renewed nationalism. Eisenhower never needed to display any such feeling, since, in the '50s, most Americans felt their country to be the unquestioned repository of world leadership. Since then that crown has appeared to sit somewhat less securely on the head of the occupant of the White House. Mr Reagan needs to reassure and to encourage his fellow countrymen.

THE WHOLE QUESTION of "the New Right" in the United States has been examined recently by Gillian Peele in an interesting study of the Right in contemporary America.⁵ Miss Peele describes the "neo-conservative" intellectual trends in the United States and then goes on to list conservative political and religious organisations (Conservative Caucus, Moral Majority, National Christian Action Coalition etc.). In fact, the book is devoted more to organisational description than it is to intellectual analysis or sociological investigation as to why "the New Right" has arisen. Part of the answer to this last question is undoubtedly wounded nationalism, but this remains undiscussed. In part, too, the obvious failures of Federalism mentioned above have excited a reaction from which "the New Right" has profited. Then there are the moral issues to which Miss Peele rightly attaches great importance. The shock felt by many Americans at the lengths to which legislative and judicial decisions have gone in defence of libertarian values or what are conceived as "minority rights" has undoubtedly done much to create the organisations listed in this book. And though those opposed to abortion or in favour of laws against homosexuality are probably in a minority in the United States, nevertheless the existence of even small groups of people holding such beliefs provides ready-made activists who can take over political parties and work during elections for their chosen candidates. Their importance is not to be judged merely from the opinion polls.

The metamorphosis in the nature of conservatism from Eisenhower to Reagan suggests a change in the characteristics of American society. There is more tension about than there was in the happy days of the '50s when it was possible for Americans to eat their cake and have it, and the United States could afford the luxury of schooling its allies. America may have learned that inequality cannot be abolished or poverty relieved by edict, but it is now richer than it was even in the 1950s and may become more powerful. Yet, to whatever heights of achievement the Republic may rise, it will still need the qualities of moderation and common sense.

⁵ *Revival and Reaction: The Right in Contemporary America*. By GILLIAN PEELE. Oxford University Press. £17.50.

THE PARTY & THE ARMY IN THE SOVIET UNION

Yosef Avidar

This remarkable piece of research uncovers the complex relationship between the Communist Party and the Armed Forces in the Soviet Union from the death of Stalin to the end of the Khrushchev period. The author also traces its general evolution from 1917 on.

This work will unquestionably establish itself as authoritative and indispensable for all those involved in the study of Soviet military and political affairs.

March, 384 pp, £24.95

Please send for catalogues

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1 Gower Street, London WC1

What Is Political Economy?

A Study of Social Theory and Underdevelopment

Martin Staniland

Staniland explores current meanings of the term 'political economy', particularly as it is applied to situations in the third world. He critically analyses a broad variety of theories, including rational choice theory, dependency theory, politicism, interdependence theory and neo-Marxism.

£18.50

Economic Growth in the Third World, 1850-1980

Lloyd G. Reynolds

This book is the first to draw together into a systematic framework the increasing body of literature on the economic histories of individual third world countries. Focusing on the forty-one largest countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, Reynolds shows that the third world has a rich historical record of growth and that its growth patterns bear some resemblance to those observed earlier in Europe and North America.

A Publication of the Economic Growth Center £35.00

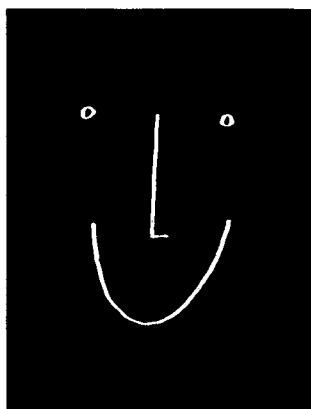
YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS
13 Bedford Square · London WC1B 3JF

It was these that Eisenhower so evidently provided at an earlier and easier period of American history. He served his

country well and left his great office enhanced by the honesty and dignity he had shown in that service.

The Hucksters of Happiness

From Ideas to Slogans—By KENNETH MINOGUE



THERE IS an echo of the Declaration of Independence about the title of Ghita Ionescu's *Politics and the Pursuit of Happiness*¹ and it gives us the clue to the fact that Professor Ionescu dates the fall of modern man from about the 1770s. His book thus belongs to what one might call, in the widest sense, the literature of prophecy, a *genre* which is seldom entirely absent from writing about states and societies. The big fall of

man in the Garden of Eden provides the overarching structure within which little current falls, like the cold war, the rape of the environment, the military uses of atomic energy (and the rest) may be discovered and explored. Without this literature, it is difficult to see how the inhabitants of modern societies could grasp the changing contours of their world.

The Ionescu diagnosis is, in these terms, medium in scale; but it ranges over our civilisation from ideas to institutions. Broadly, it runs like this. Somewhere about the second half of the 18th century, European civilisation succumbed to the illusion, first cultivated among the *philosophes* in France, that political change could bring about happiness on earth. This illusion has trivialised our lives by focusing our attention upon nothing grander than the succession of desires, and by diverting it from certain ineluctably tragic features of the human condition (such as the inevitability of death). In its pursuit, we have destroyed much of the inherited fabric of social life because we have fallen for the promises made by political parties acting as hucksters of happiness. Two doctrines in particular have come to dominate this process: Benthamite liberalism, which taught Western societies that "maximising happiness" is the point of life; and Marxist communism, which has clamped a sclerotic despotism upon Eastern countries by promising them the delights of "true community."

The very promise of happiness, so the argument goes, transforms our way of thinking about social and political

matters. In particular, it erodes moral principles and encourages the progressive articulation of interests each of which protects and advances its own claims to happiness. The effect is both to intensify social conflict and to impair a government's capacity to deal with it. Worse, each of these current doctrines of hedonistic salvation competes militarily with the other for dominance over the rest of the world. But the character of our predicament is even more dire than this suggests; for we are afflicted not merely by false beliefs and misguided practices, but by a process which continually transforms whatever we do into service to the same idea. We have, in other words, been "ideologised", and we shall remain doomed to futility (and to the mortal dangers of Superpower competition) unless we recapture what the Spanish philosopher Unamuno called "the tragic sense of life", and perform an operation which Ionescu calls by the almost unpronounceable name of "disideologisation."

It will be obvious that, in terms of prophetic literature, this is no mere bagatelle, but a full-scale opus. And in order to put it in context, we may observe that Ionescu's argument belongs in a recognised tradition of European self-criticism. Some of its elements derive from those intellectual historians (such as J. L. Talmon) who derived the violence and irrationality of modern totalitarianism from the magnitude of misplaced hope among the *philosophes*. Other elements derive from the view that contemporary society is clogged by out-of-date abstractions called ideologies, and would function better if it confronted its problems more pragmatically. But as a lifelong student of comparative institutions, Ionescu can enrich this tradition by attending to the dysfunctionality (as he calls it) of competing interests. And in the background of his criticism of happiness (entangled with his invocation of Unamuno, and other critics of modern mass society), there may be detected the view that only the reappearance of a religious dimension in modern life would have the power to break the self-perpetuating grip of ideologisation.

BUT EVEN IN TERMS OF the Ionescu argument, our position is such that religion itself would hardly be enough to reverse the process; for many forms of religion stress a kind of immanence which is itself almost inescapably a concern with happiness. If happiness is to be taken in a wide sense, then, the only device which could supply an alternative to it would be some sort of transcendental idea. Otherwise we are left at the mercy of the dominant self-evident proposition of the age:

¹ *Politics and the Pursuit of Happiness*. By GHITA IONESCU. Longman, £16.50.

that the point of everything is to make good vibes. Since the Churches are busy dismantling any surviving elements of the transcendent in order to be less vulnerable to criticism, there doesn't seem much hope of release from the predicament Ionescu describes. He can only exhort us again and again to give up happiness and contemplate the tragic dimension of life, rather like latter-day Stoics. From this point of view, his book on *Politics and the Pursuit of Happiness* contents itself with adumbrating the social and political contours of a problem and tossing it into the lap of others.

ONE OF THE MANY PARADOXES of happiness is how much people are prepared to suffer for it—a point excellently illustrated by the Jacobin attempt to create *le bonheur publique* by way of the Terror. Ionescu treats the Jacobins as an early encapsulation of the whole process of “ideologisation” in both its intellectual and its institutional forms. He argues that it is a tragedy in the fullest sense, and finds its roots in the emergence in 18th-century France of a special class of self-conscious intellectuals for whom sharing advanced ideas established a far-reaching bond. The extent to which the authorities frowned upon the cultivation of such ideas was just right for giving them a delicious sense of daring without constituting any actual danger. In all parts of the realm, this emerging set of people formed what one historian (Auguste Cochin) called *sociétés de pensée*. The striking feature of these societies, which in many cases were to become part of the Jacobin system of affiliated groups, was their classlessness. They were explicitly dedicated to what they themselves described as *sociabilité démocratique*, a curious, indeed paradoxical expression. Across the barriers of class and profession, these men cultivated a bond of intellectual sympathy; and, abstract as the beliefs they shared might have been, they were yet concrete enough to guide some intellectuals, when the elections of the Estates-General were called, in manipulating these elections so as to make sure that enlightenment would triumph in Paris.

Here, then, was a party constituted in its essentials by an idea. The idea was that of public happiness, and it was inspired at several removes by the philosophy of Rousseau, even though Rousseau himself did not seek disciples or attempt to set up a school. The process by which more or less philosophical ideas are transformed by vulgarisation into a programme of political action is central to Ionescu's conception of ideologisation. What it generally requires is a mediator between the man and the followers, a role he believes was played by James Mill in the spread of Jeremy Bentham's ideas, and by Friedrich Engels in those of Karl Marx.

A party thus constituted by an idea is a special kind of

institution; and in the case of the French Revolution, it was some little time before the Jacobins emerged as the purest exponents of that specialness. It was noted at the time, however, that the Jacobins could be relied upon to take over disciplinary duties in the new order, a task others found distasteful. Because they had a network of affiliates throughout the country (and, indeed, in some instances beyond), the Jacobins could claim a representative status that might well rival the Convention itself. But their real claim to this superiority lay in the conviction that they stood for the universal principle of Virtue itself. Hence it did not seem incongruous that the Jacobins were eventually to move into the apparatus of state *en bloc*, thus foreshadowing the development of what later came to be called by the self-contradictory name of “the One-Party State.”

During its brief period of ascendancy, the Jacobin Club (which was closed down by the Convention a few months after Thermidor) evolved most of the usages we have come to recognise as central to the politics of enthusiasm. A tight discipline meant that even the most brilliant men who tried to set up competing organisations failed to make an impact. Robespierre's importance in the revolutionary government derived from the extent to which he was largely in tune with what was implied in the idea. It was he who had the instinct—his English biographer, J. M. Thompson, calls it “statesmanlike”—to make the execution of the King a party issue; and to recognise that the King's trial could bear no serious resemblance to a judicial proceeding. Unlike many of his fellow-Jacobins, however, Robespierre wanted to salvage from the wreck of inherited tradition a cult of the Supreme Being; and, as pettifogging lawyer, he continued to sustain the Convention, a non-party representative body whose members, trembling for their necks,² finally ganged up on him. As Ionescu observes, Lenin learned from this particular mistake, and prevented the Constituent Assembly from even beginning to threaten the hegemony of his Party. One might also observe that it was the fall of Robespierre on the Ninth Thermidor which saved Destutt de Tracy from going to the guillotine on the Eleventh. (Would there, then, have been someone else to invent the word “ideology”?)

It is clear that the Jacobins reveal much about the new style of politics emerging in 19th-century Europe; but they clearly tell us more about Communist than about capitalist practices. Ionescu's argument that beneath the grand doctrinal struggles

THE REIGN OF THE AYATOLLAHS

Iran and the Islamic Revolution

BY SHAUL BAKHASH

“Dr. Bakhsh's lucid and dispassionate account is essential reading for all those in the West who need to understand the basic impulse, and evolution of Khomeinist Iran”. Sir Anthony Parsons, GCMG.

“Dr. Bakhsh has given us a major book on one of the major events of our time”. Bernard Lewis, New York Review of Books.

ISBN 1 85043 003 9

292 pages

£13.95

I.B. TAURIS & C^o L^{td}

Publishers

3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8PW

Tel: 01-836 5814 Telex: 261507/3166 Tauris

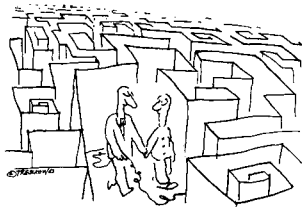
² “... Saint-Just appeared in the tribune, and read out his Report, in a sententious, expressionless voice, one hand motionless, holding the manuscript, the other emphasizing his theme with a monotonous gesture ‘like the movement of the blade of a guillotine’.” J. M. Thompson, *Robespierre* (1935), vol. II, pp. 158-9.

of our day may be discovered a fundamental agreement on the Titan's project of "building happiness here on earth" casts an interesting light on many things. We learn, as we would expect, much about the thought and structure of modern societies. But as we approach contemporary issues, Ionescu succumbs to several familiar temptations of the prophetic style: off-the-cuff comments on issues in the daily headlines; and a generalised conviction that current frus-

trations are already impelling many people towards the very path which Ionescu himself has found. One virtue of his inquiry is that he has raised the widest of all questions, and it has taken him to the threshold of philosophy and theology. But he has not crossed over. It is a measure of the problem he delineates that many readers will be tempted to interpret his argument simply as: We'd be an awful lot happier if we didn't worry so much about happiness.

The Political Ecology of Britain

Monetarism, Money & Moods—By IAN DAVIDSON



UP AND DOWNS in the fortunes of governments are inseparable from democratic politics, and they have become increasingly inseparable the more politics has come to be defined as the art of economic management. Little enough is understood of this baffling art, and that little is dangerously contingent on events, unpredictable and uncontrollable, that may happen in other parts of the world. Mr Edward Heath's Conservative government was brought down in 1974 as a result of a miners' strike; perhaps his government mishandled that strike, and perhaps he was ill-advised to turn it into a pretext for an election on the theme "Who Governs Britain?"; but incontrovertibly the conditions for a strong coal-miners' challenge were laid by the massive increase in oil prices precipitated by the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

Yet these causal links may only be apparent with hindsight. In the flux of everyday events, in which the casual observer is daily assaulted by a hail of contrary gobbets of information, it is exceedingly hard to distinguish the fundamental from the ephemeral, to assess whether a spot of bad news for the government of the day is a serious setback or merely an eccentric blip on the screen, soon to be forgotten in a surge of better news to come. In the early months of 1982, the fortunes of Mrs Thatcher's first government were at a low ebb. Few people then would have predicted the jingoistic triumph of the Falklands War and her smashing victory in the 1983 general election. When the man said that the race is not to the swift, what he meant, among other things, was that there are a lot of ups and downs in democratic politics, and that neither the ups nor the downs are necessarily deserved.

It is therefore with some trepidation that one begins to wonder out loud whether Mrs Thatcher's government may not be starting to get into serious trouble. This trouble does not, of course, come from the official Labour Party opposition, which is in as great a disarray as it was before and after its thumping defeat in 1983, and which appears incapable of mounting any kind of effective attack, political,

intellectual, or moral, against the government.

Who knows? The Labour Party may yet return as a credible opposition: having failed to make any plausible protest as unemployment rose inexorably to, and through, the three million mark, it may perhaps do so as unemployment starts to accelerate yet again. All one can say is that this particular worm shows no sign of turning just yet.

Nor does Mrs Thatcher's government so far face any serious trouble, in the main, from Conservative dissenters. The "wets", the patricians, and the old-style Tories have been purged from the Cabinet, and while some backbenchers have started to take advantage of the Government's unmanageably large parliamentary majority to stage rebellions on isolated issues which directly affect the vested interests of themselves or their middle-class electors, there is no sign of organised revolt.

No: the trouble comes from abroad, in the shape (as so often in the post-War era) of a sterling crisis, which erupted at the end of January. This was a most peculiar event, both in terms of short-term rational explanation, and in terms of the Government's reaction to it. But, peculiar or not, it may mark a watershed in the Government's fortunes.

ON THE FACE OF IT, there was no compelling reason for the sudden slump in the sterling exchange rate. After ten months of (yet another) coal-miners' strike, Mrs Thatcher's intransigence was at last promising to bear fruit, either through dissipation of support from striking miners or through the effective surrender of their leaders, or both. If Mrs Thatcher's government had identified itself with the struggle against militant trade-unionism, then a victory over Mr Arthur Scargill, whose motivation was almost overtly revolutionary, should have been seen as a signal victory indeed.

Many commentators looked for an explanation in the underlying weakness of the oil price, and in the palsied efforts of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to prop it up. Since the North Sea accounts for 5% of

Britain's national output and 8½% of national tax revenues, a fall in the oil price must be bad news for Britain.

The trouble with this explanation is that sterling's steepest fall was against the dollar, and it is in dollars that oil is priced. A very large fall in the oil price, wiping out the upward surge in the value of the dollar, was of course conceivable, and had indeed long been predicted by bearish analysts of the supply-demand balance in the oil market. But these bearish predictions had been around for so long that they had become somewhat stale, and at the time of the January sterling crisis nothing had occurred to restore them to melodramatic life. In any case, movements in the foreign exchange markets are seldom determined by cool mathematical calculation but rather by mood; and it may be assumed that the abrupt slump in sterling was motivated as much by a lemming-like loss of general confidence in the prospects of the British economy as by any narrow assessment of OPEC's chances of being able to prop up the oil price within any given range in dollar terms.

STRANGER THAN STERLING'S SLIDE in the foreign exchange markets was the Government's reaction to it. Ever since the collapse of the Bretton Woods arrangements for the international monetary system, no government has been committed to sustaining any fixed parity against the dollar, and the UK has long since abdicated any responsibility for maintaining the value of the foreign exchange reserves of Commonwealth governments. Moreover, while protesting, in concert with other industrialised countries, especially those in the European Community, at the damaging effects of high US interest rates and at the unjustified strength of the American dollar, Mrs Thatcher's government had made no secret of its belief that a decline in the trade-weighted value of the pound against the currencies of the most important industrialised foreign countries would be desirable to restore a measure of competitiveness to British industry—without, however, admitting to any policy target in the foreign exchange markets.

So it was strange that Mrs Thatcher's government, which had presided with apparent serenity if not actually grim satisfaction over a growth in unemployment unprecedented for fifty years, and which had long pretended that it had no need of a policy for the sterling exchange rate, since this could safely be left to the benign effect of market forces, reacted with little short of panic to reports that it did not care whether the pound fell to parity with the dollar or not. What it was really responding to, when it abruptly jacked up interest rates, was not so much the drop in the exchange rate *per se* (though if that proved durable it would have adverse inflationary effects through higher import prices), as the general market judgment of a loss of confidence in the Government's economic policies. The British electorate only gets the opportunity to pass judgment once every four or five years; but the sacred market passes *its* judgment every working day.

That the market should pass an adverse judgment is not really so surprising, given the rather large divergence between promise and performance. When Mrs Thatcher came to power in 1979, the electorate was advised in terms

WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE . . . ?
to enforced morality, and coercive economics?

AN END TO ALLEGIANCE

Individual Freedom and the New Politics
by Geoffrey Sampson

"... addresses problems that most people confront in the welfarist state, and shows how the sometimes abstruse arguments of liberal economists accurately describe those problems and posit the *moral* arguments for their solution. This is popularising at its best." *Economic Affairs*

£12.50 + 75p p+p

A MAURICE TEMPLE SMITH publication

THE ALTERNATIVE BOOKSHOP

3 Langley Court, Covent Garden, London WC2
Mon.-Sat. 11am-6pm. 01-240 1804
Specialists in Liberty from
ADAM SMITH to HAYEK
New and Secondhand books on all aspects
of classical liberalism/libertarianism.

TOWARD THE FINAL SOLUTION

A History of European Racism

George L Mosse

First published in 1978 and reissued here with a newly revised introduction, George L Mosse's study of European racism and anti-Semitism is a classic of its kind. Starting at the Age of Enlightenment and following the evolution of anti-Semitism through the 19th and 20th centuries, Mosse disentangles the broad scientific, ideological, and political currents that fed the growth of European racism and tragically culminated in the Holocaust.

March, 324 pp, illus, paper £12.95.

and forthcoming, July . . .

FOREIGN TRADE & INVESTMENT

Economic Growth in the Newly Industrializing
Asian Countries

Walter Galenson, editor

512 pp, £30.00

**UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN PRESS**
1 Gower Street, London WC1

of unfamiliar dogmatism that there was no alternative to strict adherence to monetarist doctrine, and that severe housekeeping and budget-cutting would restore Britain to competitiveness and prosperity. The results of six years of deflation have so far proved at variance with the intensity of the original crude convictions.¹

Inflation has come down, after a sharp initial upward blip, to around 5% a year, and the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement has been reduced as a share of gross national product, but in other respects the economic scene is rather unalluring.

THE GOVERNMENT'S RECORD in controlling the monetary aggregates in conformity with its beliefs has not merely been patchy, but has thrown up a growing uncertainty about what "money" is, how it should best be measured, and whether its supply can effectively be controlled. The containment of the budget deficit has depended dangerously, first, on milking the tax revenues from the North Sea which will in any case soon start to decline, and which may decline very steeply if there should be a lasting collapse of the oil price; and secondly, on the programme for privatising nationalised industry, which may have many other virtues, but is hardly the basis for a long-term strategy for funding the Government's current expenditures.

Deflation has driven a large slice of manufacturing industry out of business, and while the productivity and profitability of what remains has sharply improved, this has been at the cost of a level of unemployment which is much larger than in comparable economies on the continent of Europe. Moreover no economist expects, and the Government does not claim, that unemployment will spontaneously decline by any large margin in the forecastable future. No one has had the temerity to expect, even after six years of good housekeeping, that Mrs Thatcher's government would contemplate any macro-economic measures to try to bring it down, and it is only recently that her administration has manifested any urgent interest in micro-economic steps to encourage job-creation at the level of the individual employer.

IF SIX YEARS SEEMS an unconscionable time for virtuous austerity to have its reward, there may be four factors, and perhaps many more, for explaining the delayed reaction of the market judgment.

To begin with, Mrs Thatcher's monetarism seemed the right theory at the right time. After the prolonged stagflation induced by two oil shocks, discredit descended on the notions of Keynesian demand-management which, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, had appeared so economically effective and, on occasions, so electorally convenient. The old tricks no longer worked, as the Socialist administration of President

François Mitterrand of France discovered to its chagrin after its arrival in power in 1981; so new tricks had to be tried. Given the seriousness of the economic problems facing Britain, it was bound to take time before the efficacy of the new tricks could be assessed.

Moreover, amidst widespread disarray among economists about how best to recover the growth and full employment of a bygone era, it seemed at least a circumstantial confirmation of Mrs Thatcher's ideas that her anti-inflationary policies were all of a piece with policies throughout western Europe. Once the French Socialist government effected its U-turn from hectic expansion to severe austerity, there was hardly a government on the continent that was not trying sedulously to reduce public expenditure, including, remarkably, the newly-elected Socialist government of Spain. If few of them so publicly proclaimed Mrs Thatcher's faith in monetarism as such, the distinction was lost amid the impression of a general consensus in favour of austerity.

Thirdly, in a country whose relative economic decline arguably goes back 100 years, and most spectacularly since World War II, in comparison with the rapid economic growth in competitor countries, it is one thing to proclaim and then embark on a radical programme of economic reform, and quite another to overcome the frictions and institutionalised resistances which characterised that decline. When the *Financial Times* assessed the choice facing British voters just before the 1983 general election, it concluded that while the economic achievements of Mrs Thatcher's first government were modest at best, at least she had changed people's ideas. But changing ideas is a slow and aleatory process: two years on, it may seem that psychological change has been largely confined, through the mechanism of rising unemployment, to the crushing of the old expectations of the trade-union movement, with rather less evidence of conversion in the rest of the society. But when a woman as forceful as Mrs Thatcher appears to be embarking on a long-term strategy of economic and psychological reform, there is a tendency for judgment to be deferred.

Finally, it was the more likely to be deferred in the face of the personality of the Prime Minister. Seldom if ever has the British political scene been so dominated by one individual so tirelessly in conflict with every aspect of the country's received traditions and institutions, so ruthlessly effective in reducing acolytes and enemies alike to the status of pygmies. Like the Gorgon, Mrs Thatcher with her terrible intensity turned all opposition to stone. No alternative voice, no alternative policy model, no alternative political style appeared capable of laying claim to public credibility. The people mutter, but they are mesmerised. Politics in Britain, first, last, and in the middle, is about Mrs Thatcher; before such a phenomenon even the markets quail—for a time.

YET IF MRS THATCHER'S GOVERNMENT is in trouble, in terms of the credibility and the results of its economic posture, there is little reason to suppose that she will pay for it in electoral terms. The French Socialist Party, after one bare term of office, seems destined for a resounding

¹ See the *saeva indignatio* of Mrs Thatcher's *Economic Experiment*. By WILLIAM KEEGAN. Allen Lane, £9.95.

defeat next year; but in the new conventional wisdom, so long as the Labour Party remains divided, disorganised and implausible, Mrs Thatcher can still hope for a third electoral victory, even if her next three years fail to produce conclusive vindication of her policies.

By contrast, the price of relative failure would be paid, not in the voting returns, but in damage to what might be called the political ecology of the country. By political ecology I mean, loosely, the general aptitude of political actors and institutions to function together in ways that tend to minimise gratuitous conflict and optimise reasons for democratic satisfaction with the results of policy.

Though he does not use the phrase, it is concern for political ecology in this sense that is the central theme of Francis Pym's recent book *The Politics of Consent*.²

Part of his argument touches on the wild oscillations between Conservative and Socialist policies, and he laments the disappearance of almost any common ground between Government and Opposition on major national objectives, without which there can be no constructive debate about policy choices. But his main thesis, as might be expected, is directed against the divisiveness of Mrs Thatcher's stance and her rejection of the old Conservative Party values: the disregard of the claims of national unity, the lack of a humane balance between social and economic policy, the neglect of fairness and justice, the rejection of anything smacking of consensus politics. And by consensus politics, he makes clear, he does not mean consensus *policies*, but rather a political dialectic of persuasion, consultation and debate, designed to secure as much consent as possible for policies eventually adopted.

As one of the leading victims of Mrs Thatcher's purges, Mr Pym has personal reasons for a jaundiced view; her supporters might stigmatise his consensus politics as no more than a euphemism for weakness, compromise, and confusion, in circumstances which call for clarity, resolution, and radicalism. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny the evidence that her posture of confrontation *tous azimuts*, her penchant for trampling all opposition, have inflicted damage on the political ecology.

THE CIVIL SERVICE is a case in point. It may be entirely reasonable to entertain doubts whether, despite its generally deserved reputation for rationality, conscientiousness and incorruptibility, the Civil Service has made or is likely to make a dynamic contribution to the solution of Britain's problems, and those doubts can only be strengthened by reading the 1983 Reith Lectures on *Government and the Governed* by Sir Douglas Wass, formerly head of the Treasury and the Civil Service.³ But the Prime Minister, however personally energetic, cannot do without the Civil Service or expect to refashion it in her own image single-handedly; and it must be both unreasonable and dys-

² *The Politics of Consent*. By FRANCIS PYM. Hamish Hamilton, £8.95.

³ *Government and the Governed. The BBC Reith Lectures 1983*. By DOUGLAS WASS. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £8.95, paper £3.95.

FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL

*The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict
Over Palestine*

JOAN PETERS

'This book is a historical event in itself'
Barbara Tuchman

'A superlative book. *From Time Immemorial* is a magnificently documented account of the bloodying of the Holy Land by myth, propaganda and diplomatic bungling. To understand what is happening now in the Middle East, one must begin with its past, which Miss Peters traces to the present with unmatched skill.'

Theodore H. White

MICHAEL JOSEPH £15.00

SECTORS OF MUTUAL BENEFIT IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS

edited by Nish Jamgotch, Jr
forward by Fred Warner Neal

A distinguished panel of analysts examines particular areas of U.S.-Soviet cooperation: crisis communications, science, agriculture, environmental protection, space, and medicine. Analysed are agreements that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. have evolved in their mutual interest, agreements that are all too often overlooked in an atmosphere clouded by hostility and mutual distrust.

May, 256 pp, £35.00

and forthcoming, Summer '985.-

TO HELSINKI

The Conference on Security &
Cooperation in Europe, 1973-1975
by John J Maresca

530 pp, documents, £47.50

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1 Gower Street, London WC1

functional to conduct a campaign against Civil Servants as a class, with the exception of rare individuals selected for their personal commitment to her standard. The result has been a long spate of leaks, culminating most spectacularly in the trial of Mr Clive Ponting, and precipitating a counter-campaign of ministerial secrecy.

Similarly with the means chosen to curb local-authority spending. These may be an essential component of the Government's financial policy, but their abstruse mathematical formulae too often produce results which are perverse or downright absurd. The predictable Left-wing bias of John Dearlove and Peter Saunders in their *Introduction to British Politics*⁴ is generally tiresome and anachronistic; but in their analysis of the Thatcherite attack on the whole concept of local government, they have an undeniable point:

"The fact that the centre has continued to press home its attack on local council spending at a time when such spending has fallen quite dramatically suggests that the concern is less with how much is being spent than with what it is being spent on. What the Thatcher government has really objected to is that radical local authorities have been engaged in a series of innovations which are not especially expensive but which do fundamentally challenge the ethos of a market system of provision."

Similarly with the cuts in university and research spending, which may be consonant with Britain's reduced circumstances, but which do not look like a strategy for preparing a more technologically competent future

generation. Similarly with the spurning of the trade-union movement, which may secure transient gratification, but might require deliberate fostering of a high level of unemployment if a future backlash is to be avoided.

THE PITY is that polarisation and division were not the inevitable concomitant of a policy of radical reform. If

The Financial Times was right in believing, in 1983, that Mrs Thatcher's main achievement was to have changed people's minds about their old assumptions, then surely the stage was set for a more dialectical approach to the indisputable need for radical reforms. With the strength of its overwhelming majority in the House of Commons, the Government could easily have afforded to spread responsibility for hard decisions by a more open-minded debate, at least within the Conservative Party. Instead, it seems to be marching half-way through its second term without any perceptible strategy, apart from an obsession with the PSBR, and with a *modus operandi* based on command rather than leadership.

The longer the divergence between promise and performance, the larger the gap between dogma and results, between faith and works, the greater the damage to the traditional political ecology of the country. If Mrs Thatcher's policies do not precipitate an economic renaissance—and there is so far no evidence of that—she can only remain imprisoned as the standard-bearer of the haves against the have-nots, supported by the philistines and the thrusting lower-middle classes, and sustained by generalised indifference to the young, the old, the sick, the incompetent and the unemployed. The tragedy of hard-faced populism is that it becomes more brutal in conditions of failure; without failure, "Thatcherism" would have been inconceivable.

Maybe this is what Britain deserves, and perhaps expects. In a population which re-elected Mrs Thatcher in 1983, one must suspect not just a rejection of the fumbling alternative offered by Mr Michael Foot, but also an element of masochism, as if in rueful recognition that it had for too long consumed more than it produced, and could no longer avoid the penance. For, as Samuel Brittan writes in *The Role and Limits of Government*⁵:

"If people dislike lives devoted to getting and spending, if they prefer the quiet of their gardens to business or the technological rat-race, that is their affair. The problems only become a political or economic 'malaise' when they are combined with material aspirations incompatible with them."

Norman St John-Stevs, with Francis Pym one of the standard-bearers of the old-style Tory wets, can claim major credit for having championed, without visible support from the Prime Minister, the strengthening of the role of

WIN A Commodore WORD PROCESSOR !

in our challenging
literary quiz

**books
&bookmen**

Subscription £16 per year
or monthly from newsagents

43 Museum Street London WC1A 1LY

Reviews, Interviews, Comment
& Criticism by Leading Writers

⁴ *Introduction to British Politics*. By JOHN DEARLOVE & PETER SAUNDERS. Polity Press, £25.00, paper £8.95.

⁵ *The Role and Limits of Government*. By SAMUEL BRITTAN. Temple Smith, £8.95, paper £4.50.

Parliament through the systematic establishment of Select Committees. But his book *The Two Cities*,⁶ on whose cover he is depicted, grandee-style, against a background of red wallpaper and gilt mirrors, scarcely alludes to Britain's economic problems. Those Tories who are now pleading for a more consensual approach to politics made no radical attempt to tackle the country's chronic economic problems when they had the chance—their most memorable legacy to the analysis

⁶ *The Two Cities*. By NORMAN ST JOHN-STEVAS. Faber and Faber, £12.95.

of these problems was "You Never Had It So Good." Yet even they do not deny that radical changes are necessary.

As for the Labour Party, the less said about its contribution the better.

Perhaps, having lived so long in a fool's paradise, we shall have to face the fact that we can no longer afford those things which eased our economic decadence—universities and Nobel Prize winners, public service broadcasting and subsidised theatres, comfortable civility—except on terms affordable by Japanese tourists. Perhaps we shall come to terms with the idea that Mrs Thatcher represents—not salvation, as she claims, but nemesis.

Blind Spots & Believers

Islamic Attitudes—By DAVID SPANIER



I REMEMBER one day, browsing in the school library, coming across a book on Islam. At that inky teenage time, when scripture lessons were an excuse for idling, it was fascinating to discover another world of theology, with so many echoes of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, yet complete in itself. The last chapter was given over to the idea of *jihad*, holy war, by which the faithful of the Prophet would, as I recall, smite all non-believers, and more or less wipe them out. To a schoolboy it seemed jolly good stuff. It was only many years later that one came to realise, by God, they meant it seriously.

Nowadays, one must hope, some acquaintance with Islam, its ideas and aspirations, is part of every sixth-form study. Islam is important, in much more immediate ways than theological speculation would imply. A large part of the world is trying to conduct its life according to the teachings of Islam, very often in real or imagined conflict with our own life in the Western world. The point is made, comprehensively, by Daniel Pipes in his useful study *In The Path of God*.¹

"As fundamentalist Muslims took power and achieved international importance in such states as Pakistan and Iran, understanding Islam became necessary to interpret their goals and ideology. Islam also gave direction to

governments in Saudi Arabia and Libya, influenced electoral politics in democracies such as Turkey, India, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and posed important challenges to Communist régimes in Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. Islam heightened domestic tensions in Nigeria, the Sudan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Burma, and it defined rebellions against the central government in Chad, Ethiopia, Cyprus, Lebanon, Thailand and the Philippines. It fuelled international conflicts between Turks and Greeks, Arabs and Israelis, Pakistanis and Indians, and Somalis and Ethiopians."

As a journalist concerned with international affairs, one can see the relevance of this, even if it might take a lifetime of study to give each case its due. Mr Pipes served for a time in the State Department as an advisor. Did Washington take his advice? One wonders. American policy in the Middle East, whatever the importance assigned to Islamic ideology, has tilted for the most part heavily in favour of the State of Israel, whose leadership, in the past year or two anyway, has been symbolised by an Old Testament pursuit of vengeance in its Lebanon campaign.

Western thinking has for long been blind about Islam, Mr Pipes maintains. This is not so much because of the subject's complexity, he believes, rather a consequence of an historic animosity towards Islam, and a disinclination to acknowledge the political force of religion. (Surely to goodness we all know about Northern Ireland.) His point, and the point of his book, is that Islam, unlike Christianity, contains a complete programme for ordering society.

And nowhere is it being applied more stringently than in Iran. Iran indeed is a test case—for assessing Islam in practice in a modern state, and as the country which has most engaged Western concern. Two books address this dual preoccupation: *The Reign of the Ayatollahs* by Shaul Bakhash² and *Iran Under the Ayatollahs* by Dilip Hiro.³ One can read them both and still feel one has not understood Iran

¹ *In The Path of God: Islam and Political Power*. By DANIEL PIPES. Basic Books \$22.50, £15.00.

² *The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and The Islamic Revolution*. By SHAUL BAKHASH. I. B. Tauris (3 Henrietta Street, London WC2E 8PW), £13.95, \$18.95.

³ *Iran Under the Ayatollahs*. By DILIP HIRO. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £20.00.

(though, granted, feel better informed about it). Just to take a personal example as a journalist; from time to time, young men arrive at my office with long lists of people who have been imprisoned, tortured and murdered in the post-Shah revolution—some 40,000 names, I believe, have been collected—and then the other day a young man came with another list, 2,000 names long, of the torturers themselves. . . . What a ghastly catalogue, and how hopeless the ordinary citizen must feel in the face of such enormities, even if in the nature of things there is no way of telling how true they are.

What is one to make of it all? Surely a little more than Mr Hiro's bland comment that the régime has taken actions which have lost it much of the goodwill it enjoyed abroad in the early days, and that whatever the true figure of executions, such actions by the Islamic Republic have "damaged its image." Quite so. There is a wealth of detail in his account and much good reporting, which is always refreshing, rather than historical judgments. He is broadly sympathetic to the Islamic revolution, which as he says is still going on. The most vivid image of the process comes from Dr Bakhash. On the day the Shah fled the country, he found himself surrounded by euphoric crowds in the streets.

"From opposite ends of a side street, two cars, each packed with celebrants, came at great speed towards the crossing. The driver of the first car was driving on his extreme right; the driver of the second car on his extreme left. The predictable happened . . . an ironic foretaste of the many collisions that lay ahead."

With his fluency in the language, Dr Bakhash gives a sense of inwardness in writing about the policies and personalities of the régime, and is particularly revealing about Ayatollah Khomeini.

Iran's success or failure is bound to affect other Islamic experiments. Both these books look at the situation that may arise when Khomeini goes. Whatever happens, it is evident that the clergy will continue to play a dominant role.

FOR ANOTHER VIEW, and a very entertaining one, of the

⁴ *The Pride and The Fall: Iran 1974-1979*. By ANTHONY PARSONS. Jonathan Cape, £8.95.

⁵ *The Persians Amongst the English: Episodes in Anglo-Persian History*. By DENIS WRIGHT. I. B. Tauris, £17.95, \$29.50.

events that determined the Shah's fall, one may turn to Anthony Parsons' *The Pride and the Fall*.⁴ How agreeable it must have been for the Shah, cosseted by flatterers and courtiers, to be able to converse on a regular basis, and apparently so frankly, with the British Ambassador. Unfortunately for the Shah, while he much enjoyed ranging over the expanse of foreign affairs, he would never discuss internal Iranian affairs with the Ambassador until it was too late. Sir Anthony spends much time in his account agonising over whether he should have foreseen the whole thing, and if so, whether British policy should have been pursued in a different way. He is fairly hard on himself. What one can say is that British exports to Iran, which when you get down to it were the basis of our concern, show every sign of picking up under the new management. (Persian travellers and diplomats have long taken an interest in England, as another Ambassador, Sir Denis Wright, demonstrates in an anecdotal historical survey, *The Persians Amongst the English*,⁵ containing much new material.)

The Shah's chief blind spot was that he took no interest in the Islamic law and culture which not only permeated but to a large extent controlled the life of his country. But, one might suggest, the Islamic experience as a whole has a blind spot, and that is its intolerance towards the West, towards other cultural experiences. This may not have always been so throughout historical times, but mistrust and distemper seem very prevalent in Iran today. Such attitudes are born of a superiority complex, yet it is clear that the Islamic renaissance, from an economic point of view certainly, has passed its peak.

"In retrospect", observes Daniel Pipes, summing up the effect of the great oil boom:

"the revival will appear as a curious aberration. Just as the power of a commodity price-setting organisation (OPEC) defied long-term trends, so the concomitant resurgence of Islam was fortuitous and transient. Islam's revival was inappropriate because it resulted in such large part from freak circumstances, not Muslim achievements; the unearned nature of the oil wealth cannot be ignored. Buoyed by unexpected good fortune, Muslims allowed themselves to imagine that they had solved their basic problem, the inability to come to terms with the West."

A State Department view? Or a large measure of truth? Iran's moral influence may be indeed fated to end—but at what cost is still to be reckoned.

DISCUSSION

The Far-Away Falklands

By Edward Pearce



OCCASIONALLY one lets slip a remark which has behind it deeper convictions than are acknowledged. I did so with an observation in this column about the Falkland Islands War. I find myself civilly taxed for it but feel profoundly unrepentant.

I will be asked: "Why bring this issue up? Why not accept that a highly satisfactory victory has been won, or at least

that the world perceives it as such a triumph?" But the present continuous tense in which we live is history and it is necessarily subject to revision, not least as the heady emotional moods of wartime recede. I acknowledge on my part an initial hostility to the whole business. I recall saying "Bodies will finish in the water before this week's rhetoric is done." But like very many people who entertain sentiments of ordinary respect and regard for their own country, I reacted to the start of the *fighting* by unequivocally identifying with our side, and saying so.

Time has passed. We are nearly three years on from that fighting, though the cash payments continue. It is time to look back and wonder if the expedition makes sense in retrospect. I believe that it does not, that it was a misconceived enterprise, that the Government was itself caught up in day-to-day expedients and subjected to pressures which do not seem reasonable today.

I subtract not a farthing from the great heroism of those who fought. I acknowledge that nations have within themselves a need for self-respect, and that it is the strange nature of "little wars" that they release perfectly honourable, long sneered-at feelings which I more nearly share than I absent myself from. But wars, though sometimes necessary, should not be fought because they make you feel good.

And what about Grenada? If the Falklands is mistaken, can Grenada be right? Frankly, in solid Machiavellian terms Grenada made sense as the pre-emptive act of a great power which saw the early traces of another great power's influence within neighbouring territory, and acted. In terms of rational self-interest the Grenada expedition, for all the froth and drum-beating which followed, did have utility. For a country as

little involved in the South Atlantic as ourselves, we have to ask what utility the Falklands War had. Alas, I see none.

How did we come to fight this infinitely futile, infinitely sad campaign, this toy-town parody with real blood? At the time we almost all cheered or at least applauded—and some are cheering still though the bills roll in and the utility of those few thousand acres of waterlogged, grade-five agricultural land, where thirteen acres will support a single sheep, seems more mystifying than ever.

Let me start anecdotally. The Anglo-German Königswinter conference of 1982 took place that April in St Catharine's College, Cambridge. We split for study sessions into four groups. I attended the one on foreign policy, and had just listened with mounting exasperation to an elder statesman expounding on the proper Foreign Office conduct of foreign policy as not understood by the Americans. "The Americans", he drawled, "have got themselves into a frightful tizzy over some place or other called El Sal-va-dor. The Foreign Office is wiser in these matters. We would have trouble finding it on a map, and we would have left the whole matter in the hands of a junior officer. . . ." (None of this, as one keeps having to say, am I making up.) He had no sooner sat down, with the Americans duly reprimanded for their jumpy seriousness, than a messenger entered who handed to the Chairman a note. "I feel", said the Chairman, one of our most distinguished historians, "that I should interrupt to let you know that Argentine forces have landed in the Falklands." That episode says more about the FO view than I could hope to.

What followed the world well knows, though it forgets bits. On the very next day, a Saturday, Parliament was recalled. The hysteria, violence of language, and abandonment of reason which took place that day mark it off as one of the worst performances which the House has collectively given. "All power to little silly men" seemed to be the order of the day. Mr Patrick Cormack was listened to seriously, an experience unlikely to be repeated. The old Tory Right, the Suez group, the men in mourning for an impossibilist dream of military authority within the world, came from the withered margins of politics and were listened to fearfully and with respect. Julian Amery's view of the world briefly came true. It is not something which must ever happen again.

For myself I remained certain that war would be unthinkable, that the talk of an expedition had to subside. I was utterly wrong. We went for several months through a period of collective irrationality and I readily confess, having initially used my mind, to having joined the mob and closed it again. I wrote in defence of this war, for which I apologise. Once a war starts, however foolish, however morally wrong, the feeling that this is, after all, our country becomes formidable.

One of the stories out of the great Falklands trek, recorded by Charles Laurence, who filed some of the very finest copy of the war, concerned the reliance by the British Army for its "yomp" upon Mars Bars. Since they are high in glucose content, this is entirely sensible. They helped sustain a brave and admirable army whose achievement is not diminished by the vain and desolating folly of those who sent them. But the rest of Britain was also on Mars Bars—which can be sticky, glutinous, and bad for your teeth. Fleet Street was at its most patriotic and rabid. If there had been a well-known Argen-

tinian dog we would have been encouraged to kick it. But it is also true that the British needed emotionally to fight *somebody*.

For a quarter-of-a-century since Suez, the opponents of military reflexes had dominated politics. Suez itself, the last emotional blow-out of the Julian Amery/brigadier element, had ended in a humiliation which unpleasingly delighted the Left. And in the last analysis the unintelligent but very honest patriot is a more attractive man than the sneering Left-wing lecturer who enjoys national humiliation. After Suez, the cartoon character George Weber, in anorak and with placard, had had things pretty much his own way. The assumption that we are as a nation not entitled to stand up for ourselves—that the United Nations is a better homeland, that when humiliations come they should be welcomed, that the only good war was the sort waged by Ho Chi Minh or Robert Mugabe—represented a sustained inversion of natural loyalties which the generality of us find quite dismaying. But this outlook ruled as the bottom line of foreign politics. So much so that if General Galtieri had taken the precaution of being a bearded man in self-consciously worn, frayed fatigues, quoting Sartre to delighted correspondents, war against him would have been unthinkable. Would we, would Mrs Thatcher, have dared send an expedition against General Torrijos, who gave so much delight to one of the sour spirits of the age, Graham Greene?

As it was, poor Galtieri was an honorary South African, a right-wing *caudillo* of the kind which Spanish colonialism throws up all the time. War was deemed to be bad, but war against a South American dictator had two things going for it. On the Left of the spectrum, it was half-way accredited by being directed at an authentic two-star bogey. On the thinking Right, away from the Cormacks and Amerys, it had the virtue of being (like Grenada, later) winnable. Argentina is not a small country but, notoriously, it is inefficient, unheroic, and liable to fall over if pushed. The purpose of the *Exocet* missile, however, like the revolver in Damon Runyon, is of being "the old equaliser." Even an Argentinian can sink a capital ship with one of these. How far Admiral Lord Lewin had thought that out, who shall say? But perhaps the true point of the *Belgrano* episode may be that British military command did not at any time share the smoky euphoria of Parliament and Public, and looked upon any enemy ship as something to be dispatched to the bottom pretty damn quick by way of a "teaching strike."

INTO SUCH MORAL MESSES, such requirements of compound-ing death with death, do you get if war is undertaken to satisfy a yearning rather than as something within one's full capacities. For the conventional means of death, unnoticed by the unilateralist nuclear disarmers, have gone up a hundredfold. The winners of all small wars are those whose new conventional rockets or armour-plate have done best in their field-trials. Alan Clark was quoted as saying that if you fight a war, "World opinion doesn't give a damn, world opinion is queuing up to buy the kit you won it with. . . ." I have no indignant rebuttal for Mr Clark's cheerful cynicism, which after the mood of piety, thanksgiving, and damp-handkerchiefed legal self-justification is something of a relief. But the kit most

people were queuing up to buy after the Falklands War was the *Exocet*, manufactured in France, supplied to Argentina, and used with some notable effect to sink British ships and kill British sailors.

This is a crude and obvious point which out of the delicate feelings we have for our own pride tends not to be made. What precisely did we get out of the Falklands War except a warm glow, the experience of feeling good, and a Roll of Honour?

We now have back on our hands what *The Times*, perhaps after conversation with the Foreign Office, called "these paltry islands." We have 1,800 people for whom the British government spent an uncomputable sum running into billions, when in respect of similar communities on St Helena and elsewhere it will not invest a penny beyond its fixed pathetic allocation to raise them from the chronic unemployment and depression which characterises such small groupings. So we didn't spend the money we spent, or throw away the lives we caused to be ended, out of disinterested concern for the Falklanders. It would have been possible at a trivial proportion of the war outlay, never mind the money which we are now spending, to have resettled every Falkland family bloodlessly in New Zealand, Westmorland, or wherever it is that shepherds and sheep like to be. Instead we budgeted for the death of troops and for the expenditure of money systematically denied to a hundred peaceful uses in the preceding course of the Government's expenditure cuts.

A greater contradiction than combining strict monetary control with fighting a war in the South Atlantic is not to be found in the wildest jungles of fantasy. But that fantasy has been compounded by the subsequent "Fortress Falklands" policy, which involves a major garrison for this mudbank, and the building of Heathrow's long-awaited Terminal 5 . . . at Port Stanley, so that Tri-Stars and other sophisticated planes can supply the Army of the South Atlantic. We are standing in the rain tearing up banker's drafts.

Sooner or later, when the last brass instrument is silenced and when the red-faced patriots are not looking, the Falkland Islands, under whatever form of words we hit upon, will have to be ceded to the Argentinians because those islands are there and we are *here*. Stuff legal titles and stuff certainly the comic-opera nationalism of Argentina's own red-faced patriots. If the citizens of that melancholy country really want those islands, they will do the Argentinians no very great good and us no discernible harm, and it will not be irrational to hand them over. The British will come to see in time that the grotesque episode of 1982 was pure therapy. We were a great power; we have ceased to be a great power; we shall, alas never again be a great power. We are an Adlerian case, afflicted by an inferiority complex and needing to cut notches on a stick.

The war we undertook nearly three years ago was fought by the men concerned very bravely and efficiently. We learned in the field what we knew in principle: that the reduced British Army is very good indeed. But did we deter any enemies, did we do ourselves any tangible good? Surely not. This was in all senses of the word, including the narcotic, a trip.

The British, with Mrs Thatcher at their head, came out high. It was a collective act of retarded adolescence, and we all cheered. The patriotic card was played and we all fell for it. That is just a trifle hard. I don't personally think that the

Government was wicked, cynical or calculating; and I find the Raymond Briggs-E. P. Thompson approach so much standard Left-wing knee-jerking. The British Government never looked as if they knew what they were doing. The Foreign Office, leaving a junior official in charge and pushing insouciance to the point of hilarity, managed to leave the impression with the Argentinians, mistaken or otherwise, that a cathartic act of invasion would actually disembarass them. At the same time cuts in the Navy and in the Falklands garrison, reducing it to 80 men, suggested perfectly reasonably that a conquest was capable of achievement which, give or take a measure of puff-and-blow indignation, would not be resisted.

This was professional incompetence of the very highest kind. Those Foreign Office Ministers who lost their jobs afterwards deserved to lose them (and Civil Servants should have too). The newspaper image of chivalrous highmindedness by the resigning ensemble of graceful incompetents who brought off this alpha-class bungle is just one more piece of fatuous British deferential self-deception. The Falklands, if you really wanted them, could have been kept at the expense of another 100 soldiers and a plain, unequivocal, private statement that Argentine involvement of any kind was not wanted. If speech had not been fork-tongued, guile would not have doubled back and done us an injury. But when the paper-and-lath structure of defence and foreign policy first encouraged and then made possible an invasion, the British Government was trapped. It was given a choice between humiliation and war. With the baying dogs behind, it chose war.

This involved a measure of military gambling which made victory uncertain (not what any aggressor intends) and the deaths of very many servicemen a racing certainty. For, as the Government well knew from Day One, we had nothing which could remotely be called air cover. The extent of that gamble is underlined not only in the graveyards and plastic-surgery wards where so many Welch Fusiliers finished up, but in the fact that if the Argentines had wired their fuses better, two and perhaps three other capital ships would have gone down. If they had, not even the *Daily Mail*, the Government's little drummer-boy, could have sold this bizarre war as a triumph.

As it was, the Government—to a degree we shall not fully understand until all papers are released long hence—played a game betwixt bluff and war. The Opposition went along, partly because the public mood which fogged the rest of us got at them, partly in an unacknowledged hope that things would come bloodlessly unstuck, that at some point south of Ascension Island we would turn and sail for home, muttering darkly and proclaiming in the accents of Suez that we had put out a forest fire and that our mission was accomplished. Mr Edward Heath in one of his celebrated interventions called essentially for this. A large part of the Opposition, brought up like everyone else on the inevitable humiliation of the British in all modern conflicts of will from UDI to UHT, waited for withdrawal and made supportive noises until that humiliation should come. By a piece of good soldiering and by uncovenanted good luck from non-exploding shells (and because Mrs Thatcher plunged deeper at the gaming table than ever expected), the war was won and a gamble became a triumph.

It remains, as I now think, the most discreditable, amoral,

and improper episode in British post-War history, a gamble not worth the taking, a war fought for reasons of *amour propre* mingled with electoral considerations as the long expedition went on, a pathetic attempt to pretend to ourselves that we were other than we are, a pantomime war in which men had their faces burned off.

Neil Kinnock got into dreadful trouble with the Tory press for responding to a heckler who alluded to Mrs Thatcher's "guts", that it was "a pity some people had to leave theirs on the beach to prove hers." In my view, Mr Kinnock was categorically right, and morally he scored right between the eyes when he said that.

THIS WAR WAS OF NO MORE IMPORT that the one between the big-enders and the little-enders. The most you can say is that fortuitously it accelerated the already expected interlude of liberal democratic government in Argentina which will precede the next military régime (the British are no more interested in liberal democracy in the Argentine than in Ungo-Bungoland; and indeed it is none of our business). At the end of the day Mrs T. gave herself something to rejoice at, extricated the islands, and held a Roman triumph. But the Falklands remain worthless; the cost of supporting and defending them has turned nightmarish; and thirteen hundred men, 258 of ours, and over 1,000 Argentinians, were drowned, blown up, or scorched to death.

The *corpus delicti* remains, sodden, emblematic, morosely pleasing to sheep, and the inducer of folly in two second-rate countries in decline. It is as much material use as that plot of land for which Fortinbras went to war.

*We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name—
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it. . . .
Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw.*

What *have* we done to be drawn into such folly and death and still be proud of it?

A Look to the Future

By Julian Amery

EDWARD PEARCE'S invective is as brilliant as ever, but what has happened to his political imagination? Can't he see beyond the end of his nose? Just because the Falklands are 8,000 miles away he sees them as those "sodden emblematic islands" which will have to be ceded to the Argentine just because "they are there and we are *here*."

The Spanish establishment thought much the same when Christopher Columbus landed on an outcrop in the Caribbean and was put into gaol on his return. Had they written off his discovery, as Pearce writes off our recovery of the Falklands, there would have been no Mexico or Peru. Yet modern Europe rose very largely on the discovery of the

Americas and their wealth. If Pearce would only look he would see that the Falklands are not the end of the road but the Clapham Junction from which the South Atlantic and the Antarctic continent could be developed very much to our advantage and the world's.

The South Atlantic is important strategically. When the Suez Canal is closed, and it has been closed twice since the Second World War, Europe's trade with the Indian Ocean and the Gulf has had to go round the Cape of Good Hope and through the South Atlantic. If the Panama Canal were closed the trade of the North American West Coast—now the centre of gravity of the US economy—would have to go round Cape Horn. There may be no immediate threat but the potential threat is plain enough; to guard against it calls for an effective base under a stable government. None of the South American or African riparian States offer the necessary political stability. The British Falkland Islands, with their new fully-developed airfield and improved harbour facilities, could provide an excellent communications and headquarters centre.

The South Atlantic has economic importance too: it is rich in fish which the Russians, the Poles, and the Japanese are busy harvesting; and there are also substantial hydrocarbon deposits. With the present oil glut they may not be worth developing, but the swing from oil glut to oil shortage could be pretty rapid.

THEN THERE IS the Antarctic continent itself. Geologists believe that the basic structure of the Antarctic continent is a continuation of the Andes mountain chain and the Southern African plateau. There is thus a reasonable chance that the minerals present in the Andes and in South Africa may lie in some quantity under the Antarctic permafrost. To extract them would be a problem, but surely nothing like putting a man on the moon. The job could only be done commercially by a very large multinational consortium. But from where would this consortium operate? Of all the points close to the Antarctic continent the Falklands would seem to offer the best prospects of political and economic stability. Given good air-communications and a small but effective garrison, the likelihood of a renewed Argentine invasion is remote.

Nor should we think of our relations with the Argentine in purely adversary terms. The best guarantee for stability would be to bring the Argentine, Chile, South Africa, and other riparian states, with the backing of the USA and the European Community, into a new South Atlantic community. One task of this community would be to assure the security of the South Atlantic sea and air routes; another could be the development of the Antarctic.

The claims of the Antarctic Treaty signatories are frozen until 1991—but Britain, Argentina and Chile all have extensive claims, and they overlap. What a hopeful opportunity for putting our claims together and developing them as a syndicate.

With the Falkland Islands and their Dependencies and Ascension Island with its airfield, Britain is very much a South Atlantic power. How foolish it would be to withdraw from the one bastion which gives us national access to an unexplored continent and an unpopulated one at that. Again,

a remarkable challenge to act as a catalyst to activate the other interested parties.

PEARCE'S THINKING is as wet as the Falklands are damp. He sees our victory as purely pyrrhic. But his eyes are closed to the opportunities it has brought. Of course he is right to say that had we developed the airfield in the 1970s—and had a battalion instead of a company as a garrison—there would have been no war. Had we made it plain that we had no intention of giving up the islands there would almost certainly have been much more private investment in their development than there was.

To be sure, the British Foreign Office is much to blame for seeking, in the noontide of decolonisation, to get rid of what they (like Pearce) saw as a burden rather than an opportunity. Parliament, operating by general national instinct rather than by shortsighted logic, always took a different view, and shot down every attempt by Governments of all parties to abdicate our responsibilities. Mrs Thatcher, proceeding on the same wave-length, sent in a task force and won. Yes, Pearce, it was a gamble, 8,000 miles from base and without adequate air cover; but it came off. Isn't that how the Elizabethan adventurers raised us from an island off the continent to become a great power?

Now, Pearce, you would have us throw away the prize for which our men fought and died and the prize that may lie beyond in the waters and under the ice of the Antarctic. In my view, it would be inflicting a wound on our national morale. Think of the consequences of telling our people who rejoiced in the Falklands victory that they have to abandon the prize to the very people who despoiled the islands and whom we defeated. Could we ever look ourselves in the face again? Yes, there were 250 British dead; this was the price we paid for previous negligence. Yes, the battle was won by our forces but the war could not have been won without the wholehearted support of the British people, and it was forthcoming.

Latin-American "solidarity"? It doesn't exist. We now know that once General Galtieri had decided to externalise his internal problems he debated whether to attack the Falklands or Chile. Surely we have had enough experience of Arab and African "solidarity" to know how little all this means in practice.

In victory magnanimity? Yes, Churchill was right; but we didn't let the Germans off all that lightly, and we certainly did not give Dr Adenauer's Federal Republic the lands which Hitler had claimed and seized. What we did do, and Churchill foremost of all, was to lay the foundations of a European Community into which France and Britain could lead Germany by the hand and so bring her back, as has transpired, into the family of Europe. Cannot we do the same in the South Atlantic and lead a bankrupt and defeated Argentina into a South Atlantic community embracing Chile and all the other interested parties?

Look beyond your nose, Pearce: and try and see through the clouds that so often cover the Falklands. Try at least to glimpse the opportunity for political reconciliation and the innovative creation of new wealth which these British islands could afford us and mankind.

LETTERS

"Kremlinology"

THE ARGUMENTS of both Ambassador Max Kampelman and Dr George Urban ("Can We Negotiate with the Russians?", *ENCOUNTER*, February and March 1985) are based on some basic view of Soviet society, and it is doubtless a "Kremlinological" one. Accordingly, I have gone back to your fundamental study on the subject ("The Arcane Art of Kremlinology", *ENCOUNTER*, March 1983), and I hope my remarks on it will also be pertinent to the Kampelman-Urban discussion.

While making justified and realistic observations on the weaknesses of "Kremlinology" and the nature of the Soviet system, Professor R. V. Burks engages in a kind of shadow-boxing with what he calls Soviet reality—and ends up with similar misjudgments to the Kremlinologist he justly criticises.

Burks lines up six contingencies from which the reader has to make a selective decision, although "historians and political scientists have only some general and rather divergent notions about the inner nature of the Soviet régime." But what strategies can be developed, if a deeper understanding of the nature of totalitarianism does not yet exist, or is not yet generally accepted? Burks speaks of the inadequacy of the "underlying models", which state that the Soviet system "is either inherently dangerous to the rest of the world unless destroyed" or that it is becoming "authoritarian", and, if given some Western financial help is capable of "essentially peaceful . . . evolution in a pluralist direction." Without any guidance the poor reader is left sitting on the fence in this vital dilemma!

The author goes on to ponder about the "political fragility" of a system which cannot maintain itself without the forces of police and the military. I feel that with more justice the opposite can be argued. The Soviet system has proved to possess an enormous stability once it has completed the social atomisation of its citizens, preventing and forestalling any forms of ideological criticism or opposition. The police are only one of the manifold means of obtaining the aims of such a dictatorship. It is commonplace to write about the weaknesses of Soviet "Planned Economy." But what about the strength of the totalitarian system once it has permeated the whole social fabric? Obviously, its economy is inefficient, and makes the citizens poorer year by year. But the political strength of the Soviet structure is such that it has created millions of beneficiaries, not just in the commanding Party, but in all administrative offices in factories, in education, in research (apart from the huge military complex), and so on. People would

seem to be more conservatively inclined; can they any longer really envisage a change in the system? Do they see any alternative after over 60 years of terror and dictatorship?

IT IS IMPORTANT to realise that the crises which the Soviet people have experienced in all these years would have swept away any democratic government hundreds of times. However, the Soviet dictatorship has always survived "*politically*"! This ought to disprove any talk of inherent "fragility." It is true, any crack in the political structure of the Communist system would be dangerous, impossible to undertake or tolerate, but the term "fragility" evokes the impression of objective weakness, as if "it could happen overnight . . ."

It seems to me the opposite is true. The Soviet dictatorship is now *total*, as it has successfully isolated its citizens from each other—and from the world at large; at the

same time, millions have become in one way or the other beneficiaries of the present system. In their decisive numbers, in high and low positions, they live out their daily lives not unhappily, and remain "tolerant" and "conservative" mainly for lack of choice. Thus, it is, in my opinion, misleading to speak of a "disaffected élite" waiting for the day off of the man-at-arms. Both Urban and Kampelman hesitate to predict an end to the Soviet dictatorship, but seem to await a thaw, a humanisation, an "historic compromise."

Burks made a very interesting remark: "I have tended to move in the opposite direction although I am far from holding that 'destruction' is an acceptable or necessary solution." My question is: moving in new directions is perfectly all right, but do we know where the journey is taking us?

ERNST LOWE

London

Darkness unto Death

WHEN I READ earlier *ENCOUNTER* articles by Mr Edward Pearce, I thought here is an intellectual of a rare quality who is not afraid to expose the truth in sensitive areas, where others conceal or distort it beyond recognition. His article "Darkness unto Death" [*ENCOUNTER*, March 1984] dispelled my admiration completely. The assessment of the Northern Ireland tragedy must have been written from his darkest intellectual *sanctum sanctorum*—"My country right or wrong", where the light of objectivity and truth does not penetrate.

No doubt, both sides must be blamed. The Roman Catholic Church, like any other inflexible, unyielding and powerful body, does not contribute a whit to solving the tragedy, but the cause of the tragedy of Northern Ireland is the inflexible and unyielding power of the Orange Order. History teaches us that those who enjoy such power never concede at a round table. And when the killing starts they "do not deal with Terrorists", and so their dirty consciences are of the purest white. The *ultima ratio regum* is only recognised in the club where the killing is legalised as in war between nations.

It is not true that Ireland was never previously united as one country as Mr Pearce says. It was, until England colonised it, exploited it, and finally divided it—allowing the Protestants to establish, unchecked, a socio-political system of a near master and slave nature. That system did not change radically for the last four centuries as democracy and human dignity grew stronger elsewhere, in the affairs of men. The Catholic minority in Northern Ireland is still denied today the basic human rights. The sharing of political power is constantly refused. Discrimination exists in schooling, in jobs, in career promotion, and generally the minority is considered as second-class citizens.

On the mainland the Irish are considered as pigs, sub-humans, stupid, and not able to understand democracy. In this context, we have to consider the possibility that if people are for centuries treated as sub-humans, generation after generation, some of them are most likely to become just that. And if true democracy was practised in Northern Ireland the minority would recognise it and respect it. We may have great pleasure laughing at the plethora of jokes about the Irish, admiring a cup with the handle on the inside; but, who knows, maybe the terrorists have a laugh at our expense, when planting a bomb.

The Jews believe that they are the Chosen People. The Germans claimed to be the Master Race and the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants are convinced that their mission in life is to rule over other peoples. Britannia rules the waves, and God created the earth and Englishmen . . . Anybody that is not WASP is automatically inferior and contemptible.

AND THUS carries on Mr Pearce, Ireland is a small nation, certainly incompetent, not like the superb British soldiers, because it could not capture the Mission Church killers. The Government in Dublin is called "a régime" whereas Ulster carries the noble name of "parliament." Dublin would panic and beseech the English to stay, should they decide to leave because the inferior régime cannot begin to cope with the American-armed, Soviet-influenced terrorism that hates the Republic more than it hates Britain . . . What an extraordinary analysis, to put it mildly. IRA terrorism is not of Soviet making but Russia's influence is real, everywhere, and particularly where democracy fails to deliver what it preaches. That much even Mr Pearce would admit. The analogy with Grenada where the Russian threat was

real on the doorstep of the USA: a possibility of United Ireland as a Marxist State on the doorstep of Britain is imaginary and a poor excuse for the Protestants in power.

The killing is not over yet. Correct. The children who throw stones at the British troops today will be planting bombs tomorrow. The generation still in embryo is already conditioned to hate, to despise, to kill on both sides of the sectarian fence. Ian Paisley is in Mr Pearce's black book, but as a better man than the terrorist because he did not kill anybody. I propose that Ian Paisley and many others like him are also terrorists, only their killing is by other means. Their killing is silent, condoned, legalised. They do not destroy individuals by bombs. They kill generations and the dignity of man by keeping the fire of sectarian superiority, hatred, and fear alive, forcing another human being to live on his knees. Whose crime against humanity is greater?

To blast innocent people by bombs is certainly inhuman. But is it truly human to trumpet a victory that took place four centuries ago, to open the wounds year in and year out and keep alive the monster of long-gone religious wars that caused people to slaughter each other in the name of God? Europe has grown out of this shameful folly long ago. Why is this infamous ghost still alive in Northern Ireland?

MR PEARCE IS CONVINCED that there is no solution and to talk about "an Irish dimension" is ludicrous. "Ireland will not be united for the single good reason that her people hate each other." Where is the source of this hatred? In whose interest is it to keep it alive? Can it be removed? These are the questions on which we can build a new hope and remove the guilt of us all being the assassins. Religion *per se* today has less hold on Protestants and Catholics alike, and both denominations have more in common than is assumed. The hating is a tumour on the brain. The inflexibility of the Protestants is caused by fear, for they are afraid to become a minority in an united Ireland and that fact confirms their guilt.

I believe that problems caused by human beings can be solved by human beings if they are prepared to be truly human. A united Ireland would be a new Ireland governed neither by Dublin nor by Ulster but by a new spirit that would ensure protection of the new minority and their full integration, social and political. In the Ireland of a "new dimension" the hatred and the wounds would be healed and forgotten in one generation. What is needed is courage and humility on the part of politicians and intellectuals who fashion our life and our attitudes.

But Mr Pearce does not want any solution. He rides high on the Protestant's syndrome of superiority and any change of the *status quo*, the possibility of living in harmony with "the inferior", is an anathema to him, even at the price of innocent blood that will go on spilling. The thought that Britain will eventually win, in the nicest, most British way,

comforts him. History too backs him up. Britain has won nicely and quietly in Munich, at Yalta, and when she withdrew on the wings of *divide et impera*, propelled by *Dieu et mon droit*, from India and Palestine. In the wake of her nice victory, mental and physical Gulags grew like mushrooms. Her victory unleashed a torrent of innocent blood, the stench of which refuses to leave our nostrils. She has won nicely in Grenada, letting one of the members of her precious fantasy, the Commonwealth, be devoured by wolves.

Recently Mrs Thatcher left her armour at home and rushed to Moscow to prostrate herself in humility and reverence at the altar of Power. A arch-priest of Evil has died who, most probably, from his death-bed has given orders to bomb Afganistan's villages. She has paid her respects like a good member of the club whose sole aim is to enslave and rule over other peoples.

Darkness unto Death does not only live in Northern Ireland. It dwells permanently in the kingdom of our "glorious" *homo sapiens*. Any cracks that might let in some light of wisdom, tolerance, justice, objectivity are quickly patched up by the mediocre, spineless, power-drugged politicians—and "committed" intellectuals like Mr Pearce.

PETER PAUL KRASUCKI

London.

SS-20s at Greenham Common

THE REMARKS of your correspondent from Amsterdam (Martin Kriek, "Letters", ENCOUNTER, November) were marked by that quality which the French, untranslatably, call "*le fair-play*." No doubt about it, it took some courage for Petra Kelly, a fully privileged and protected dissident in the West, to venture into East Berlin and also to sound off on the matter of peace and disarmament. She did indeed take "her share of the blows [from the truncheons of German *Volkspolizei*] with some equanimity" At least she knew what the risk of the provocation was, limited though it was by her semi-diplomatic status as a Western member of the *Bundestag*.

In any event, the blows involved were relatively light ones. But what are we to make of Mrs Glenys Kinnock, that courageous wife of the British Labour leader? Accompanying him as she did to the very heart of Soviet power, she told the leaders of the Kremlin—in the November visit of the Kinnocks to the USSR—exactly what she felt about protest and nuclear arms.¹ I leave it to your readers to judge whether Mrs Kinnock is as realistic as Ms Kelly. She seems to me, fair play or not, to take the Innocent Booby prize of the year. She told the Russians that they should make no mistake about it: she would be protesting, with her regiment of Greenham Common women, "even if SS-20s were stationed there"

One feels sure that if only light blows were being administered by the Red Army guards, protecting their SS-20s at Greenham Collec-

tive Common, Mrs Kinnock would also bear them with equanimity. But might not the local Suffolk branch of the Kremlin's notorious Serbsky psychiatric clinic be tempted to find such dissident forms of naivety worthy of investigation? The KGB is not exactly understanding when it comes to demonstrations in front of Red Army military bases.

J. R. McLELLAN

Oxford

¹ According to a Moscow dispatch from Nigel Wade (*Daily Telegraph*, 24 November, 1984): ". . . 'I defended the position of the peace movement in the West very strongly', said Mrs Kinnock. 'I made it very clear that if there were Soviet SS-20s at Greenham Common my objections would have been equally as strong as to the presence of American missiles.' . . ."

Polish Culture

KONSTANTY JELENSKI's statement ("A Dialectical Paradox", December 1984) that: ". . . under the abhorred [e.g. Communist] régime, Polish culture had attained—in many fields—a level superior to pre-War years" is the silliest thing I have read in years. Can it be that M. Jelenki pulled the Editor's leg and the Editor never noticed?

I do not know, of course, what M. Jelenki means by "culture." I suspect that, like most Germans and Poles, he simply means "art." It would be tedious to list here the names of only some writers, actors, musicians, sculptors, philosophers, mathematicians, architects, journalists, etc., etc. who distinguished themselves before the War. And what about the quality of the pre-War schools and universities?

Mr Jelenki has pulled a boner that is not even funny.

WOJCIECH GNIATCZYNSKI

Munich

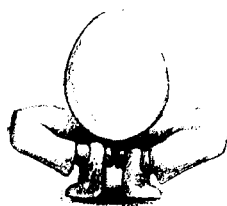
No "leg-pulling" intentions at all! In many fields (such as film, poetry, painting, literary studies). Polish achievements in the post-War years and particularly since 1956 did, in my opinion, surpass the already considerable level they had (with the one exception of film) in the 1918-39 independent Polish Republic. Largely because of the paradoxical character of this creative outburst in an environment as unfavourable as the Communist system, Polish culture in general gained an international prestige attained only twice in its history: in the 16th century and in the 19th century, Romantic period.

K. JELENSKI

Paris

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
Thamesmouth Printing Company Limited,
Service House, Stock Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex

Life & Letters Today



London
SOME YOLK: *It is one of our great virtues that the British have always been healthily suspicious of the so-called intelligentsia—an ugly mongrel-word, invented by the Russians after their revolution, for which there is no respectable English translation [Alan Williams writes].*

Perhaps the word is best rendered into what the Americans call egg-head—once defined as “a person of intellectual pretensions, often a professor . . . superficial, feminine, supercilious . . . a self-conscious prig . . . a bleeding heart.”

To which the late Adlai Stevenson snapped back: “Egg-heads of the world unite—you have nothing to lose but your yolks.”

MAIL ON SUNDAY

Heidelberg
GREENHORNS: West Germans just don't view their government as “pro-Environment”, according to Heidelberg Zoo director Dieter Poley. He bases this conclusion on a survey of Zoo visitors taken last summer. People were asked to identify the source of a quote containing the excerpt:

“Man's awareness of his dependency on the natural environment has to a large extent been lost. His behaviour is directed against nature and threatens the bases of human existence and well-being.”

In choosing from among three alternatives, 60% placed the text in a catalog of demands by the “Association for the Protection of Nature”. One third guessed it was part of the “European program of the Ecological-Democratic Party”. Only 4% correctly identified the source as a Federal Natural Protection Law passed in September 1976.

On other questions, Zoo visitors were aware that the white stork is the Endangered Bird-of-the-Year on an environmental group's list, while only 10% could correctly name the sea eagle as the bird represented in stylised form on the Federal Republic's coat-of-arms. Poley's biggest surprise, he said, came from those under 18, many of whom thought “ecology” was the name of the philosophy espoused in the Green Party platform, or that “ecosystem” described the social order desired by the Greens.

THE WEEK IN GERMANY (Bonn)

London
THREE-AWAY LINE: *The sexual confusion of “Yenil” is nothing as compared with “By Design” (Gate Cinema, Bloomsbury), a desperately sincere and archly embarrassing film about a lesbian couple (Patty Duke Austin and Sarah Boisford) who decide they want a baby. The comedy of prospective pregnancy is—pardon the expression—laboured.*

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Sarasota, Florida
LITERACY: The Federal Appeals Court in Atlanta allowed the state of Florida to withhold diplomas from eight Sarasota seniors who failed a functional literacy test.

In the 1970s, politicians in many U.S. states rebelled at reports that students were graduating from high schools without knowing how to read. The Florida Legislature ordered the functional literacy test for graduating seniors in 1976. Eleven black students subsequently filed suit,

charging that the test, which is written on an eighth-grade level (aged 13-14) discriminated against blacks.

High school students begin taking the test in the 10th grade and are assigned to remedial classes if they fail. Only those who had not yet passed the test took it in their senior year.

Judge George C. Carr of the U.S. District Court in Tampa ruled in 1979 that the multiple-choice examination was neither racially nor culturally biased; but ordered the state to wait until 1983 to begin withholding diplomas. By then, he said, every student would have had a chance to receive 12 years of education in an integrated system.

Two-thirds of the seniors who failed the test this year are black. One, Vernon Kearney, is deeply troubled by the weight the test carries. He said: “I've got enough credits to graduate. In academics, I'm passing. That's the only thing holding me back. I don't think one test should spoil 12 years.”

NEW YORK TIMES

London
MEN OF LETTERS: Aston Villa are in trouble with the Football League for wearing outside advertising insignia on their shirts when they appeared live on TV against Liverpool last month.

The BBC head of sport said last night: “We must make sure this does not happen again. We were put into an impossible position. We tried to avoid close-ups. . . .”

It was the dot above the letter I and the size of the letter T which breached the League's regulation that letters should not be more than two inches high. (It was an inch larger.)

If found guilty, the club faces a heavy fine. A Villa spokesman said:

“It's a storm in a T-cup.”

DAILY MAIL

London
RED-HOT BLUES: Mr Gerald Burton, 26, a heating engineer, and his wife Jill, have applied to take action in the civil court against a Sex Shop for allegedly supplying blue videos which were not as explicit as advertised.

The couple (of Loose Lane, Sompting, West Sussex) who paid a £30 membership fee to join the “Private Shop” chain and paid £3 for the hire of each video, are making a claim for the return of their money.

DAILY TELEGRAPH



London
UNHAPPY LANDING: *When somebody lands in a tricky, difficult, or awkward situation, they might well say, ‘This is a pretty kettle of fish.’*

Years ago it was the custom in the Border regions of Scotland to go on riverside picnics where salmon would be caught, boiled on the riverside in a kettle—that is, a cooking pan—and eaten on the spot. Such picnics became known as a Kettle of Fish.

The word “pretty” originally meant “tricky”. So, when the picnickers were having trouble landing their salmon, which apparently happened a lot, they would be faced with a Pretty Kettle of Fish.

DAILY MAIL

The
University of
Chicago
PRESS

A premier publisher in the United States
with an eye on world affairs

Political Science _____

By Stephen M. Meyer
**THE DYNAMICS OF NUCLEAR
PROLIFERATION**

By A.F.K. Organski, Jacek Kugler,
J. Timothy Johnson, and
Youssef Cohen
BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND TAXES
*The Demographic and Political
Transitions*

By George F. Kennan
AMERICAN DIPLOMACY
Expanded Edition

By James Cracraft
THE SOVIET UNION TODAY
An Interpretive Guide

By Bertrand Badie and
Pierre Birnbaum
**THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE
STATE**

By Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann
THE SPIRAL OF SILENCE
Public Opinion—Our Social Skin

Forthcoming _____

By Steven L. Spiegel
**THE OTHER ARAB-ISRAELI
CONFLICT**
*Making America's Middle East
Policy, from Truman to Reagan*

Political History _____

By Friedrich Katz
THE SECRET WAR IN MEXICO
*Europe, the United States, and
the Mexican Revolution*

By William H. McNeill
**THE METAMORPHOSIS OF
GREECE SINCE WORLD
WAR II**
and
THE PURSUIT OF POWER
*Technology, Armed Force, and
Society Since A.D. 1000*

By Jerome R. Mintz
**THE ANARCHISTS OF
CASAS VIEJAS**

By Wolfgang J. Mommsen
**MAX WEBER AND GERMAN
POLITICS, 1890-1920**
and
THEORIES OF IMPERIALISM

By Gerhard L. Weinberg
**THE FOREIGN POLICY OF
HITLER'S GERMANY**
*Diplomatic Revolution in
Europe, 1933-1936*
and
**THE FOREIGN POLICY OF
HITLER'S GERMANY**
Starting World War II, 1937-39

For further information about these or any of the thousands of our other books in print, write to:
126 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SD
5801 Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637, U.S.A.